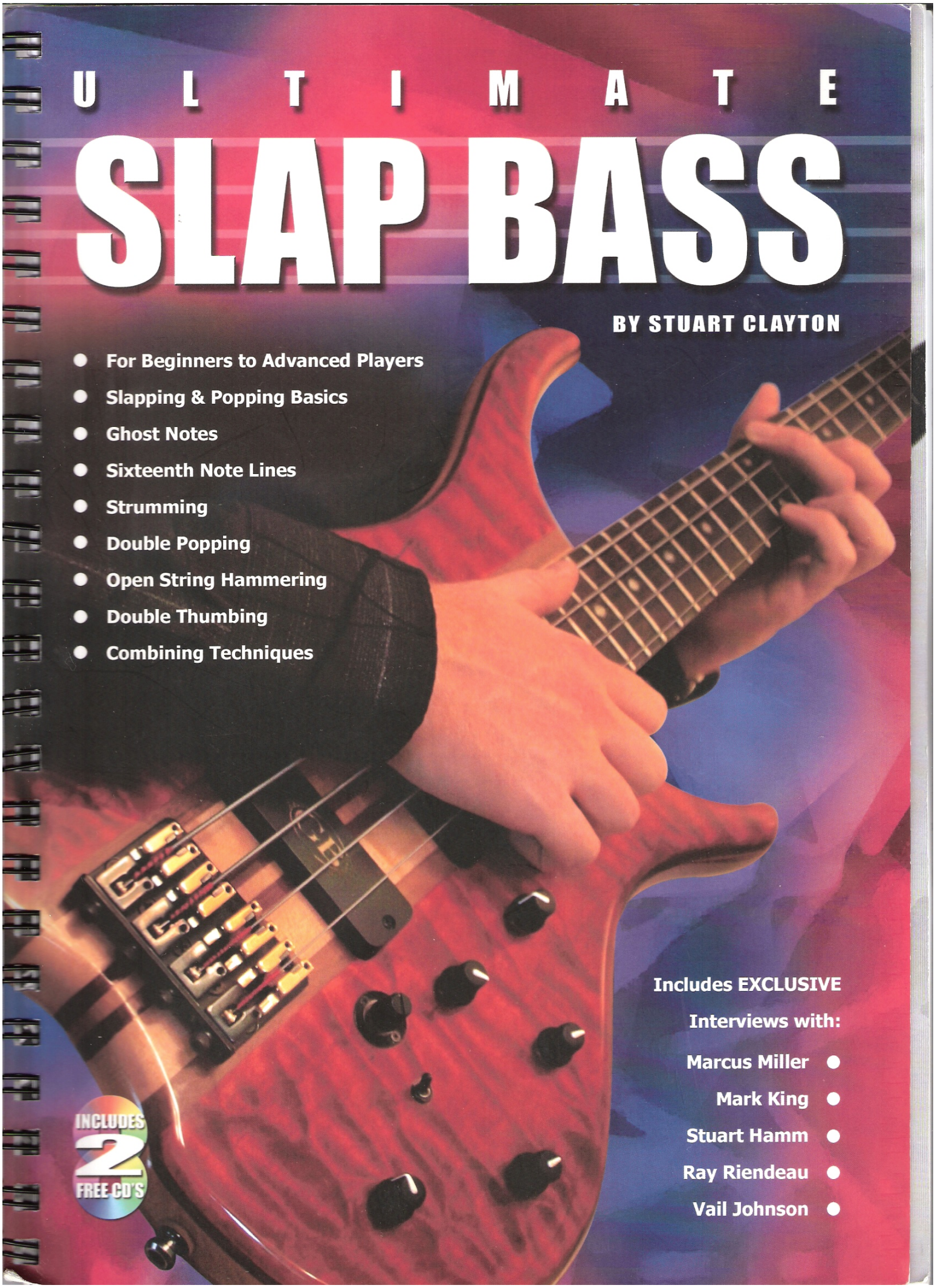
VISIT…

ULTIMATE SLAP BASS

BY STUART CLAYTON

- For Beginners to Advanced Players
- Slapping & Popping Basics
- Ghost Notes
- Sixteenth Note Lines
- Strumming
- Double Popping
- Open String Hammering
- Double Thumbing
- Combining Techniques



INCLUDES 2 FREE CD'S

Includes EXCLUSIVE Interviews with:

- Marcus Miller
- Mark King
- Stuart Hamm
- Ray Riendeau
- Vail Johnson

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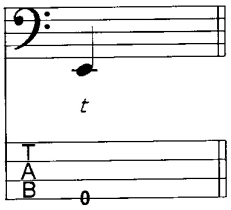
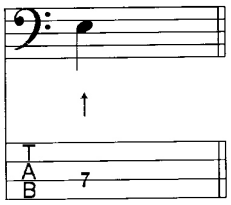
Notation Legend

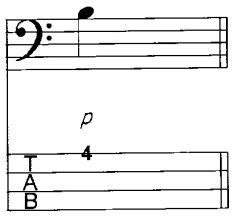
The following symbols and conventions have been used to notate the music in this book:



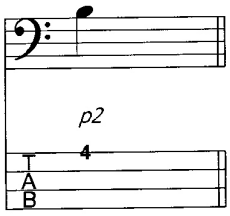
SLAP:
Note is slapped with the right hand thumb



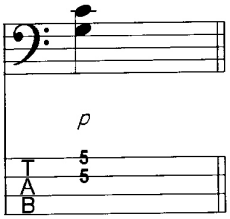
THUMB UPSTROKE:
Note is played with an upstroke of the thumb



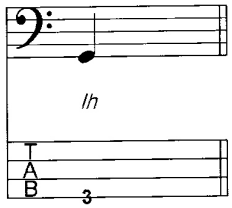
POP:
Note is popped with either the first or second fingers of the right hand



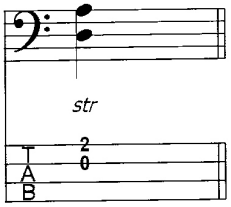
POP:
Note is popped with the specified finger of the right hand



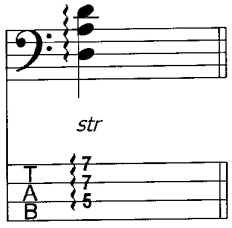
POP:
Notes are popped together with two fingers of the right hand



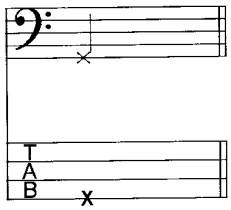
LEFT HAND SLAP:
Note is played by hammering on with the left hand



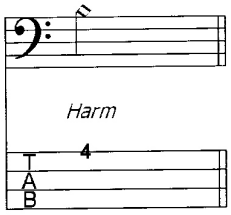
STRUM:
Notes are strummed with the fingers of the right hand



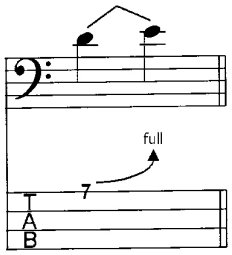
FLICK:
Notes are strummed in quick succession with the fingers of the right hand



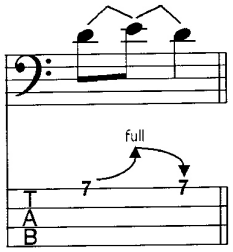
GHOST NOTE:
A pitchless note



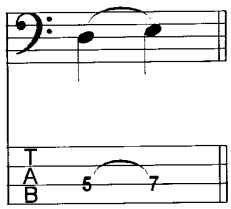
HARMONIC:
Note is played as a harmonic at the fret specified



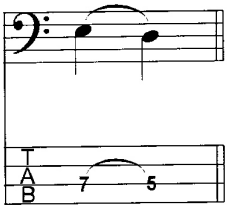
BEND:
Note is bent upwards to the pitch specified. Full = full tone, ½ = half tone



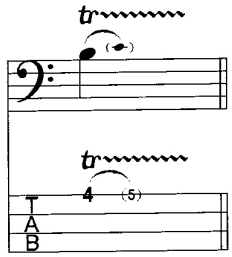
BEND & RELEASE:
Note is bent upwards to the pitch specified then returned to original pitch



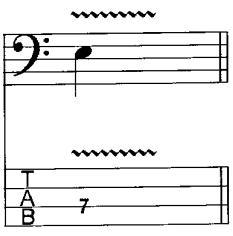
HAMMER-ON:
Second note is played as a hammer-on. Only the first note is struck



PULL-OFF:
Note is played as a pull-off. Only the first note is struck



TRILL:
Notes are rapidly alternated by hammering-on and pulling-off continuously



VIBRATO:
Note is vibrated by rapidly bending and releasing it

Guide to the CD's

There are no less than 227 exercises in this book, and most of these are accompanied by an audio track on the enclosed CD's. Unfortunately, due to the time and space restrictions of the humble compact disc, I have not been able to include every exercise. You'll find that all of the crucial exercises that demonstrate actual playing techniques are represented, but some of the grooves in the exercise areas have been omitted. The recorded bass guitar has been panned hard left, meaning that if you pan your stereo hard right you will be able to play along to the track without the recorded bass.

CD 1

1. Tuning Notes
2. Chapter 1 - Exercise 1
3. Chapter 1 - Exercise 2
4. Chapter 1 - Exercise 3
5. Chapter 1 - Exercise 4
6. Chapter 1 - Exercise 5
7. Chapter 1 - Exercise 6
8. Chapter 1 - Exercise 7
9. Chapter 1 - Exercise 8
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11. Chapter 1 - Exercise 10
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14. Chapter 1 - Exercise 14
15. Chapter 2 - Exercise 15
16. Chapter 2 - Exercise 16
17. Chapter 2 - Exercise 18
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22. Chapter 2 - Exercise 23
23. Chapter 3 - Exercise 24
24. Chapter 3 - Exercise 25
25. Chapter 3 - Exercise 26
26. Chapter 3 - Exercise 27
27. Chapter 3 - Exercise 28
28. Chapter 3 - Exercise 29
29. Chapter 3 - Exercise 31
30. Chapter 3 - Exercise 32
31. Chapter 3 - Exercise 33
32. Chapter 4 - Ghost Notes
33. Chapter 4 - Exercise 34
34. Chapter 4 - Exercise 35
35. Chapter 4 - Exercise 36
36. Chapter 4 - Exercise 37
37. Chapter 4 - Exercise 38
38. Chapter 4 - Exercise 39
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54. Exercise 58
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56. Exercise 60
57. Exercise 61
58. Exercise 63
59. Chapter 6 - Exercise 64
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87. Chapter 8 - Exercise 93
88. Chapter 8 - Exercise 94
89. Chapter 9 - Exercise 97
90. Chapter 9 - Exercise 98
91. Chapter 9 - Exercise 99
92. Chapter 9 - Exercise 100
93. Chapter 9 - Exercise 101

CD 2

1. Chapter 9 - Exercise 102
2. Chapter 9 - Exercise 104
3. Chapter 9 - Exercise 106
4. Chapter 10 - Exercise 108
5. Chapter 10 - Exercise 110
6. Chapter 10 - Exercise 111
7. Chapter 10 - Exercise 112
8. Chapter 10 - Exercise 115
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15. Chapter 11 - Exercise 124
16. Chapter 11 - Exercise 125
17. Chapter 11 - Exercise 126
18. Exercise 127
19. Exercise 128
20. Exercise 129
21. Exercise 131
22. Exercise 134
23. Exercise 136
24. Chapter 12 - Straight Feel
25. Chapter 12 - Shuffle Feel
26. Chapter 12 - Exercise 137
27. Chapter 12 - Exercise 139
28. Chapter 12 - Exercise 141
29. Chapter 12 - 12/8 Groove
30. Chapter 12 - Exercise 142
31. Chapter 12 - Exercise 143
32. Chapter 12 - Exercise 145
33. Chapter 13 - Exercise 146
34. Chapter 13 - Exercise 147
35. Chapter 13 - Exercise 148
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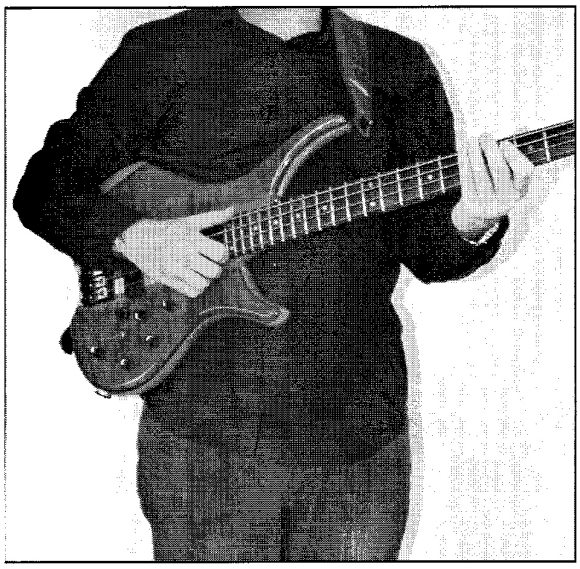
85. Chapter 17 - Exercise 216
86. Chapter 17 - Exercise 217
87. Chapter 17 - Exercise 218
88. Exercise 219
89. Exercise 220
90. Exercise 221
91. Exercise 223
92. Exercise 224
93. Exercise 225
94. Exercise 227

Before You Start...

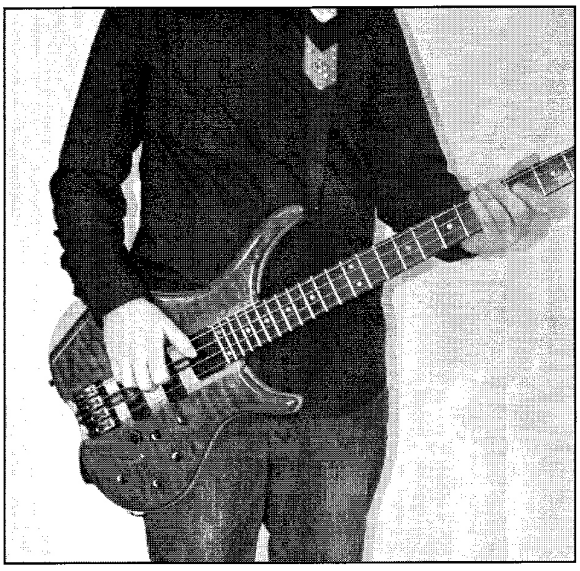
Before we get started on the exercises, there are a few practical considerations to be addressed. It is important to be comfortable and relaxed before you play and the following tips are designed to give you a head start.

How To Wear The Bass

Let's first think about how we wear the bass. Every player has a different way of holding and playing the instrument, and determining where you like to wear the bass is important. Many bass players wear their instruments quite high on their bodies, or at least higher than a guitarist would. This enables them to keep their forearms at a more appropriate angle to the strings, making many aspects of the slap technique easier. Other players prefer to wear the bass lower and consequently have a very different hand position, with the arm more outstretched and the slapping hand at a right angle to the strings. Consider the photographs below and notice the difference in the right hand position.



Short strap length



Long strap length

While each position has its own merits, it is very important to find the one that is right for YOU. I have met and taught many players who have decided to wear their bass high/low because that's what their favourite player does. Unfortunately, they later realise that what works for their favourite player does not necessarily work for them! I personally prefer to wear the bass so that it remains in roughly the same position whether I am sitting or standing, and I highly recommend this to anyone. In this position my arm is at a comfortable angle to the strings, which in turn allows me to slap them with the correct part of the thumb. It also means I have to worry less about accidentally slapping the wrong strings. Another benefit of my preferred playing position is that I do a lot of my practise seated, so when I do stand up to play I don't find that everything feels different because I have had to change all the angles in my arm/wrist. I must stress again though that this is merely what works best for me.

Before You Start...

Setting Up Your Action

Learning to slap can be made a lot easier by setting up your bass to work for you rather than against you. Undeniably, slap and pop is a lot easier if you have a lower action. If you don't know how to adjust your bass's action, I would advise taking it to a guitar repair shop and having it set up properly by a professional. Again, it will be a case of finding what works for you - lower action can lead to more fret buzz, and while this is not particularly undesirable for slap and pop, you may not want it in your fingerstyle tone. I play equally in both styles, so I try to find a happy medium - I set my action as low as I can get it without causing excessive amounts of fretbuzz. I also find it useful to play slightly lighter gauge strings: I use a set 40 - 100 although some players like to go even lighter. Be aware though that lighter strings can result in a thinner tone.

Relax!

Many people struggle to play slap bass convincingly because they simply aren't relaxed enough. Your slapping hand must be absolutely relaxed in order to get the maximum amount of flexibility from it. Much of the slapping action comes from the wrist - a good analogy is to imagine shaking up a bottle of beer in your right hand. Notice how your wrist twists without your arm moving much? This is the same action that you should use for slap bass. If you find that your wrist is tensing up excessively, try to shake your hands out before you play - this will help relieve some of the tension in your arms and wrists and hopefully make it easier to play.

A Word About Practising

When learning something new, be it a song, a scale or a technique, the most important thing is to practise it in a structured and disciplined manner. With slap bass in particular, many of the exercises you will need to work on are rather mechanical. This is because there are ways of attacking and muting the strings that need to be thoroughly mastered in order to begin applying them correctly. As you work through the book you will begin to understand where your weak points are, and which exercises you need to pinpoint in order to improve in those areas. You should develop a practise routine that incorporates these exercises on a daily basis. This concept of 'woodshedding' - playing through material over and over - is an important part of learning anything new, and I encourage you to work on the exercises that will enable you to improve on a daily basis. It's also worth mentioning that while I encourage the use of a drum machine and metronome when practising these exercises, I also recommend playing through difficult exercises in free time. This will enable you to get the notes under your fingers. Once your hands know what they are doing, you can get started with that drum machine.

As I said earlier, some of the exercises you need to work on in order to get the techniques under your belt are quite mechanical. Even so, I have made every effort to keep these exercises as musically interesting as possible, and offered suggestions along the way as to how you can adapt them further. None of the great players mentioned throughout this book got where they are today without a lot of practise, and the same applies to you. You will find however, that if you practise every day, and with some discipline, you will improve - and probably quite quickly. The old saying 'practise makes perfect' definitely applies here!

As well as studying the material in this book you should also make a point of transcribing other players riffs and lines as much as you can. Time spent transcribing should also be a part of your practise routine. Studying the players who use the techniques in this book will enable you to understand and use them better. Each player has his own individual nuances and ideas that do not always come across clearly on paper - they have to be heard. Try to listen to as many of the players mentioned throughout the book as possible. See the Discography at the back of the book for the tracks in particular that I recommend checking out and transcribing.

Tuning Up

CD 1: Track 1

Before we get started on the exercises, let's tune up. Play Track 1 on the CD to hear G, D, A and E tuning reference notes.

Section 1

Beginner Level

Chapter 1 Slapping Bassics 16

Chapter 2 Adding the 'Pop' 24

Chapter 3 Using Hammer-Ons, Pull-Offs & Trills 30

Chapter 4 Ghost Notes 36

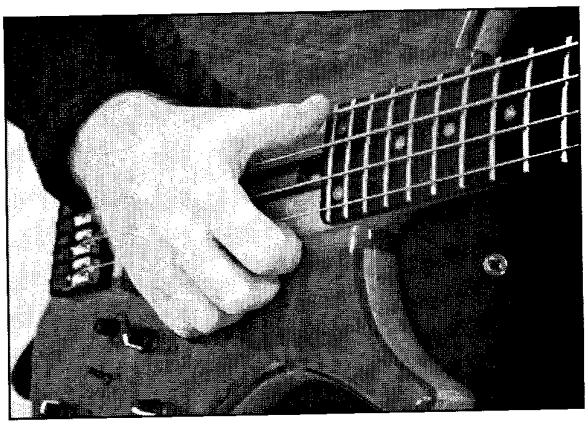
Chapter 5 Popular Scales & Modes for Slap Bass 42

Beginner Level Exercise Area 54

Chapter 1

Slapping Bassics

In this first chapter we are going to look at the most fundamental aspect of slap and pop - the thumb slap. It's very important to get your slapping technique accurate right from the start since this is the foundation upon which everything in the book is based - remember that bad habits tend to be difficult to break out of once you have settled into them. The slap itself is performed using the side of the thumb - you will need to strike the string with the knucklebone, as you can see in the picture. This may cause some pain or discomfort at first, and may lead to a blister, but you'll find that a callus (an area of hard skin) will soon form there.

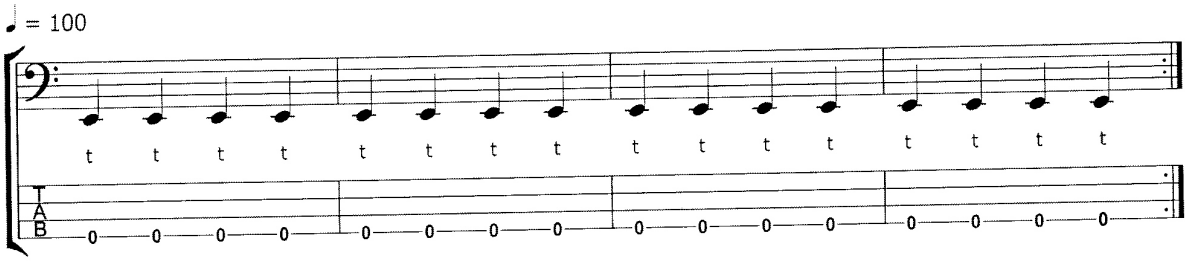


As you can see from the picture, my arm is at an angle to the bass - this allows my thumb to be parallel to the strings. Having my arm at this angle (which I maintain whether I am seated or standing) means that my thumb is in an excellent position for me to accurately slap any of the strings. It also means that I am much less likely to accidentally strike either of the strings on either side. If my arm was completely parallel, or at more of a right angle (as it would be with a very low-slung bass) my thumb would be at a much more severe angle, and I would experience problems slapping any string other than the E. I would certainly argue that this hand position is the most accurate for slapping. If you intend to get into some of the more advanced techniques later in the book you will find that this arm/thumb position helps for those too.

Exercise 1

CD 1: Track 2

We are going to begin by simply slapping the E string. You should keep your arm and wrist completely relaxed throughout, and try to let your thumb 'bounce' off of the string. You should not be tense in any way. Your thumb should be striking the string at the end of the neck, just over the last fret on your bass - you can also see this in the photograph above. It is the sound of the string hitting the fretwire that gives slap bass its funky, metallic tone.



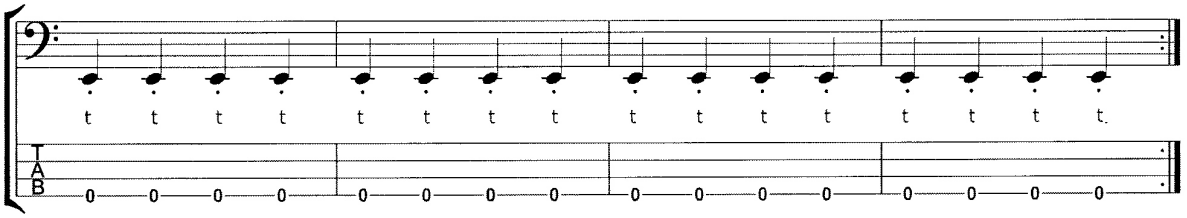
It's worth spending the time to perfect even this most basic exercise, so don't rush onward until you are completely satisfied with what you are playing. With all the exercises in this book I advise you to listen closely to the CD and try to reproduce what you hear on the track.

Exercise 2

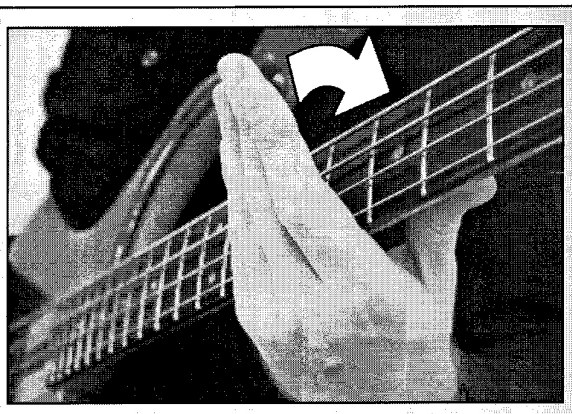
CD 1: Track 3

Now that we have looked at how to slap the E string, we will examine how to mute it in order to stop it ringing until the next time you hit it. This is done by lightly touching the string with the left hand. (Note that your left hand should not be producing any sound at this point. In later chapters we will use it to create ghost notes and hammered notes, but for now we are using it purely as a muting device). Try slapping an open E and then lightly muting it with your left hand. If done correctly you will stop the string sounding completely. This is how we are able to play shorter notes - known as staccato notes - with the slap technique. Being able to play staccato is as important to your slap playing as it is to your fingerstyle playing. This next exercise is the same as the first except that we are going to shorten each note. Note that staccato marks do not appear in the TAB, only in the notation.

♩ = 100



PROBLEM? You may find that when you mute the string you hear a ringing tone afterwards instead of silence. If this happens it means you have positioned your left hand in such a way that you are sounding a harmonic when you mute the string. Although I don't consciously think about muting when I play, I mute with my fourth finger of the left hand directly over the sixth fret. The reason for this is that there is not a strong harmonic at the sixth fret and therefore having my hand in this position should mute the string completely. If your finger is over the fifth or seventh frets you are quite likely hear a harmonic. See the photograph for the correct position for your fingers.

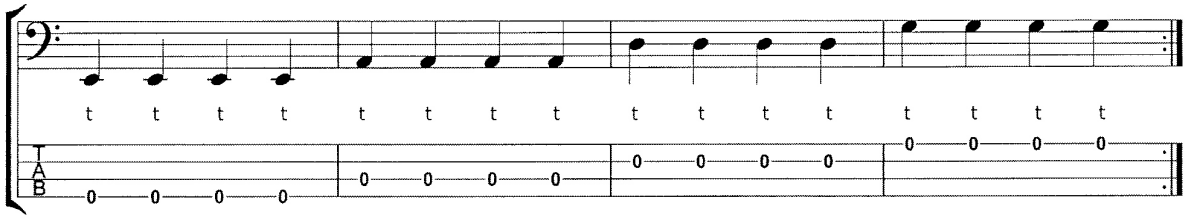


Exercise 3

CD 1: Track 4

Unfortunately, you can't just slap away at the E string forever! Let's now tackle how to slap the rest of the strings. This is more difficult since there will now be other strings on either side of your thumb. For much of the time, you will be slapping the lower strings (the E and A) and popping the higher ones (D & G). However, there will of course be exceptions to this rule and it is therefore good practise to learn to play all of them with your thumb. In this exercise we are going to practise slapping all four strings. You'll probably find that you need to apply some left hand muting to the last note of each bar to stop it ringing when you move to the next string.

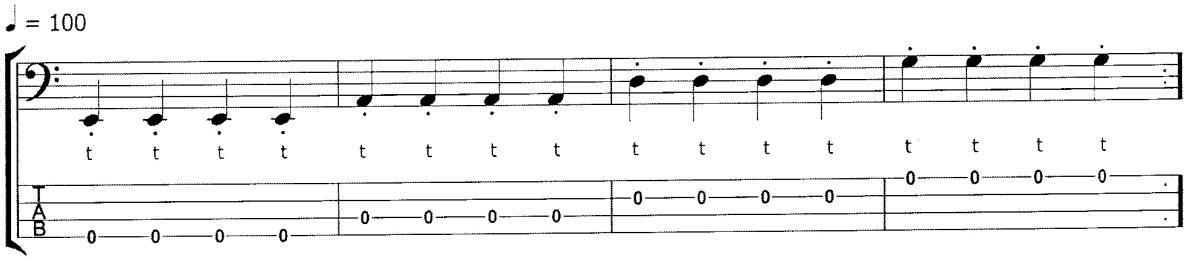
♩ = 100



Exercise 4

CD 1: Track 5

We will now play the same exercise and apply the left hand muting technique to every note. Being able to play both legato (long notes) and staccato (short notes) is very important in the slap and pop style, and you should take time to master this aspect of the technique.



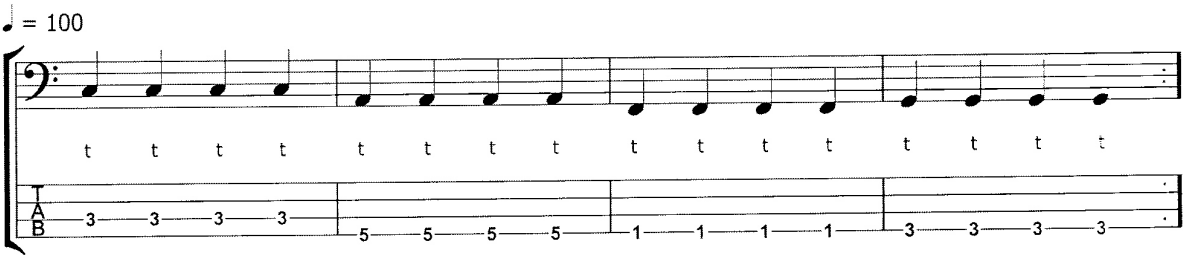
A lot of people associate music with just notes, but there's a lot more to it than that. In the same way a baby understands a language before it can speak it, I experienced music before I could play it.

VICTOR WOOTEN

Exercise 5

CD 1: Track 6

Now that open strings have been covered in some detail, we can move onto fretted notes. These are slapped with the thumb in exactly the same way as open strings. In this exercise we will simply slap four notes in each bar, and allow them to ring (i.e. no left hand muting) as we did in the first exercise.



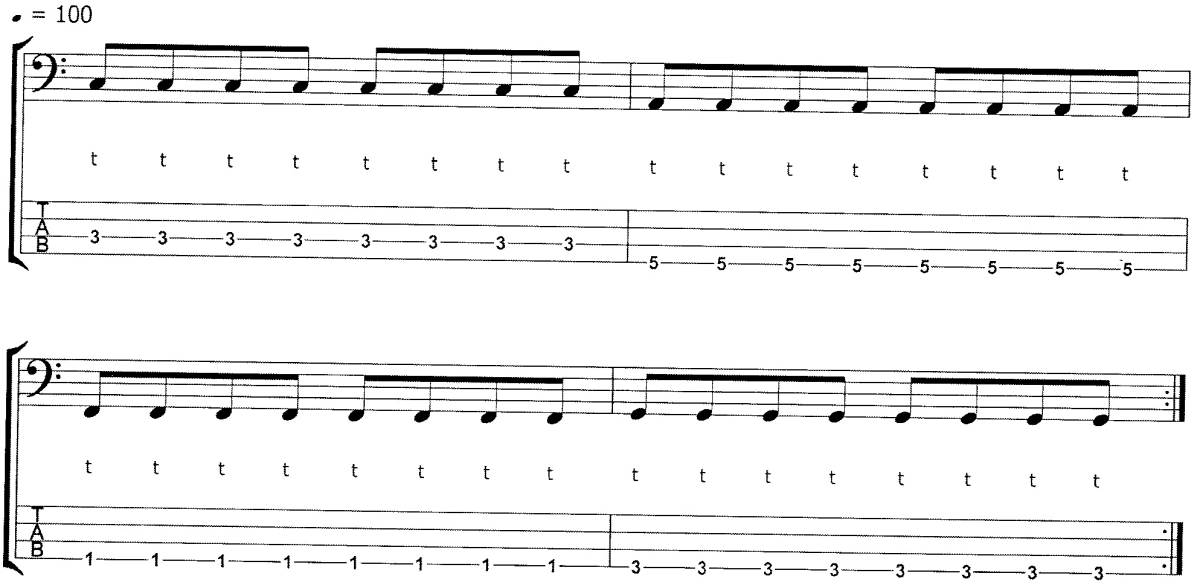
Once again, try to match what you are playing to what is on the audio track, paying attention to anything that sounds amiss. If you find you are accidentally striking other strings you need to go back and work on the previous two exercises again.

TIP! It's important to listen carefully to what you are playing and analyse it as critically as you can. Practise all the exercises slowly and pay close attention to the technique you are using. Does it sound like the CD? Does it sound messy? If it does, the chances are you are also striking the strings either side of the target string. If so, you need to examine your technique and correct it accordingly.

Exercise 6

CD 1: Track 7

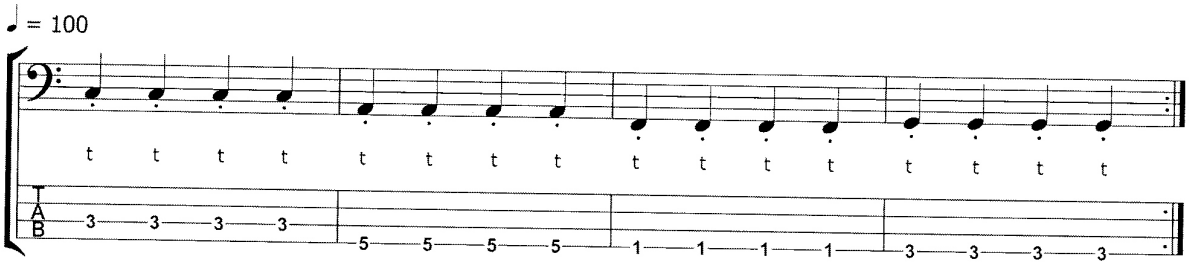
Let's now double this up into an eighth note groove. The key to playing quicker lines fluidly and with confidence is relaxation - that thumb really needs to bounce off the string. Don't let the fact that there are now twice as many notes worry you - the tempo is slow enough for this line to be easily playable.



Exercise 7

CD 1: Track 8

Let's now apply the muting technique we learnt in Exercise 2 to fretted notes. It works in exactly the same way - to stop a note from sounding, simply lift your left hand from the note slightly after you have played it. Try not to let your fingers completely leave the string; just lift them enough to prevent the note from ringing.

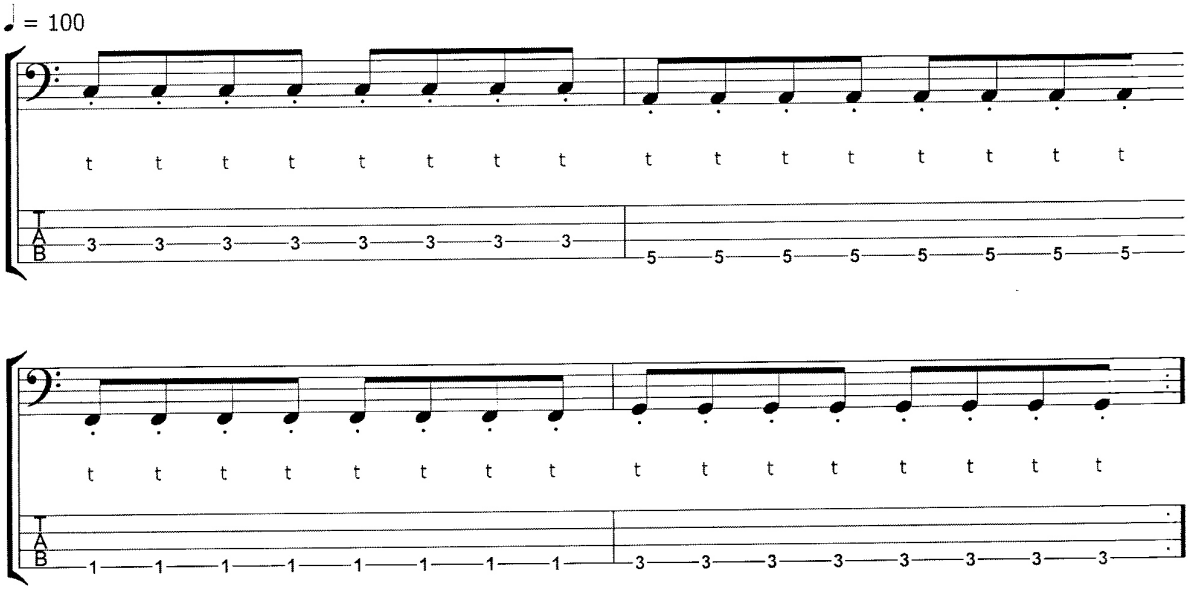


TIP! Be your own worst critic: do you like what you hear? If not, ask yourself what you are doing wrong. Whenever I come across something I can't do, I pull it apart piece by piece until I discover exactly what it is that is holding me back, then I work on it until I have cracked it. This works for all aspects of bass playing, not just slap and pop.

Exercise 8

CD 1: Track 9

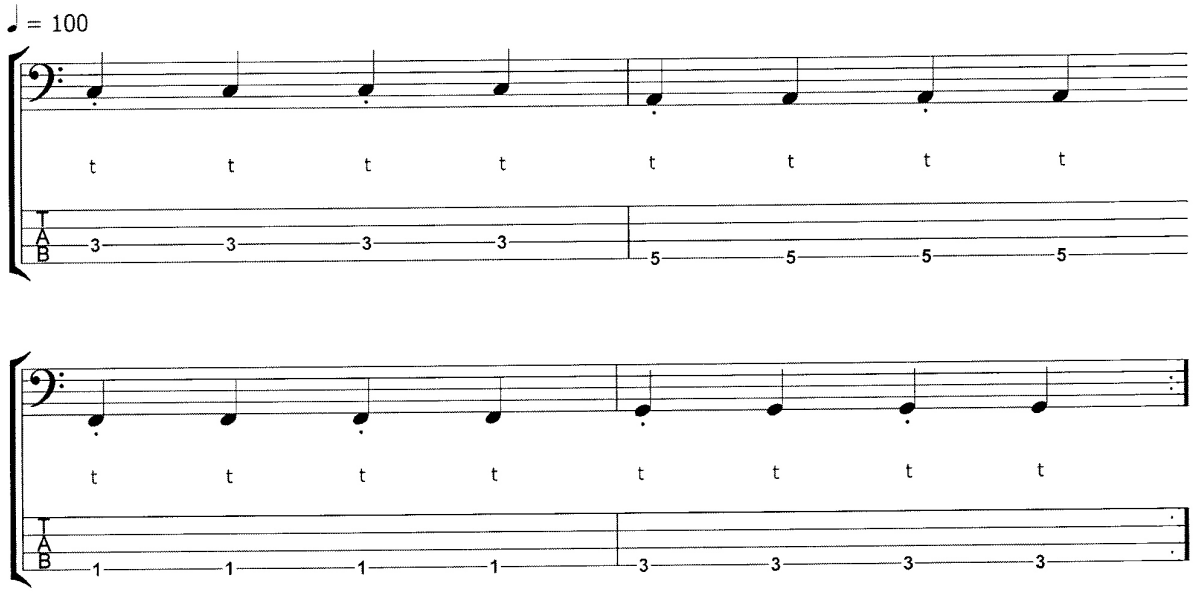
Let's now try this with an eighth note groove. As you'll hear, adding the left hand muting technique to lines like this one can really make them groove.



Exercise 9

CD 1: Track 10

In this exercise we will alternate between ordinary and muted notes. Practising both varieties in combination will enable you to become more fluent at applying both to your slap playing.

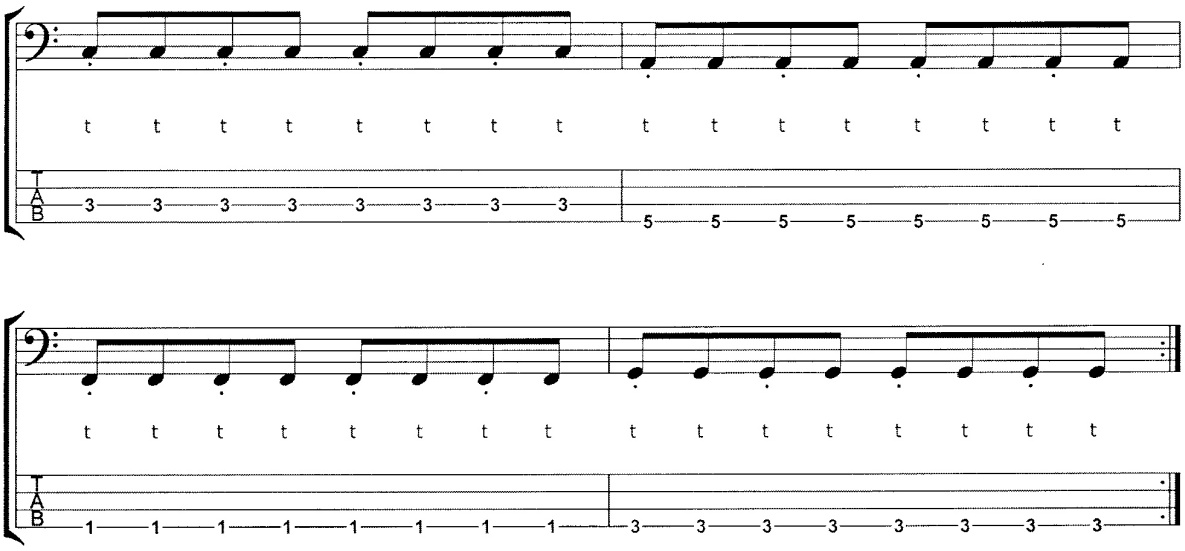


Exercise 10

CD 1: Track 11

This exercise is a progression of the previous one. This time we will alternate between legato and staccato notes in a continuous eighth note groove. Adding this technique to an eighth note bass line can really drive things along. To hear the difference, compare this exercise with Exercise 8 - you will hear that by making every other note staccato the feel is completely different.

♩ = 100



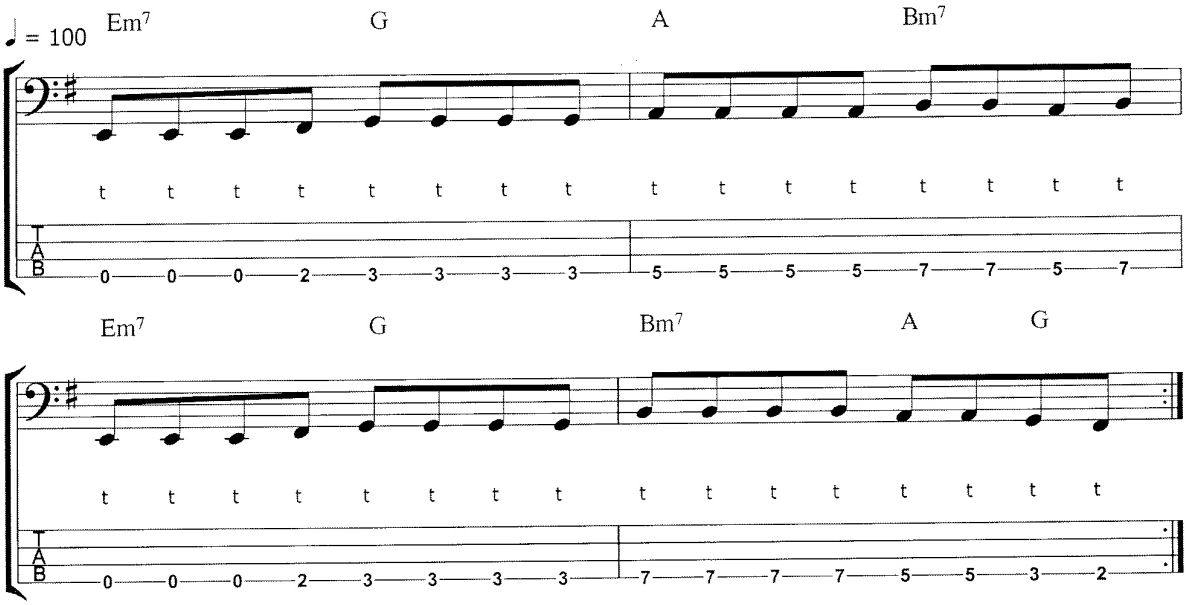
You will need to bear in mind that staccato marks are rarely indicated in slap notation and that a notes' duration will most often be left to the players discretion. By learning the difference between legato and staccato at an early stage, you will be better equipped to intuitively interpret further exercises on your own.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter we have studied the fundamentals of slapping a string and controlling it once we have hit it. You should now practise the following four exercises in the Exercise Area, paying close attention to both the notation and the track. Note that staccato marks have not been indicated in any of these exercises. It's down to you, the player, to either listen to the tracks to see what I have played, or see what feels best for you as you play through them.

Exercise 11

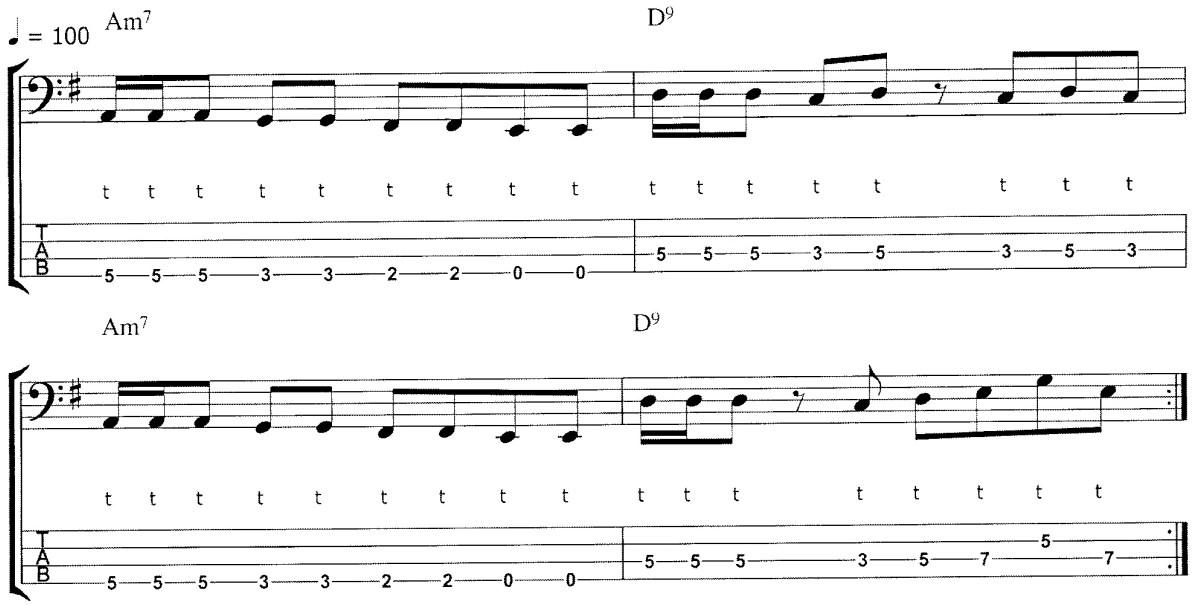
This exercise is a simple ascending line that is played entirely on the E string. When you feel comfortable with this groove you could adapt it so that the notes in the second and fourth bars are played on the A string. As this exercise isn't included on the CD you will have to use your best judgement as to whether or not to use the left hand muting technique. I suggest trying it first with and then without to see which you like best - maybe it will be a combination of the two.



Exercise 12

CD 1: Track 12

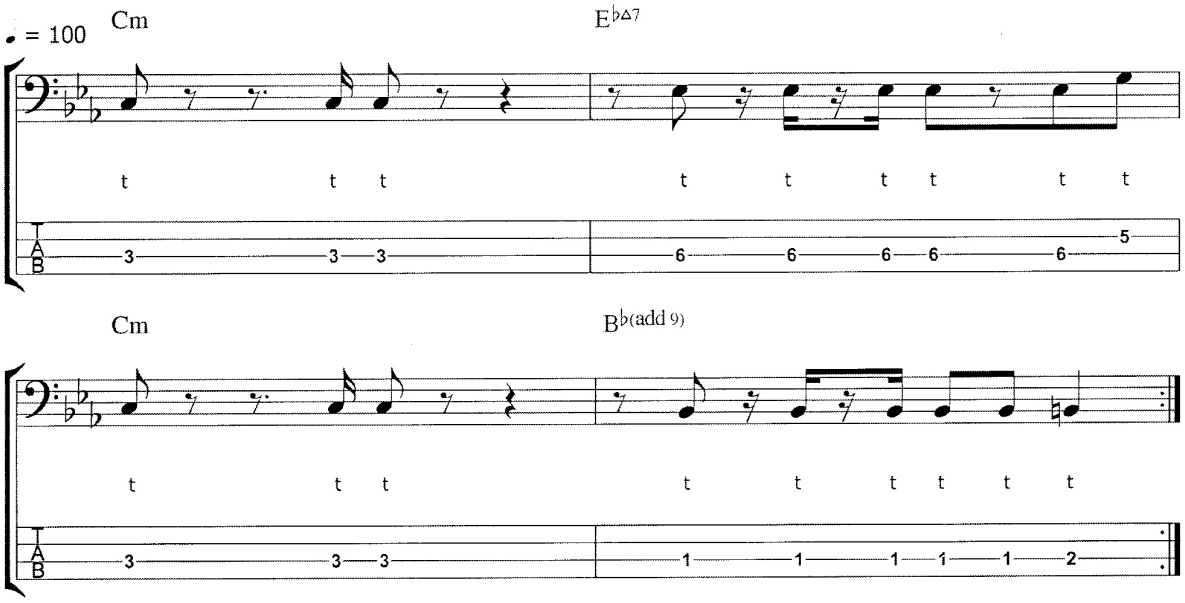
This one features some sixteenth notes on the first beat of each bar. As with all slap playing (and indeed bass playing in general), the key to executing these flawlessly is relaxation.



Exercise 13

CD 1: Track 13

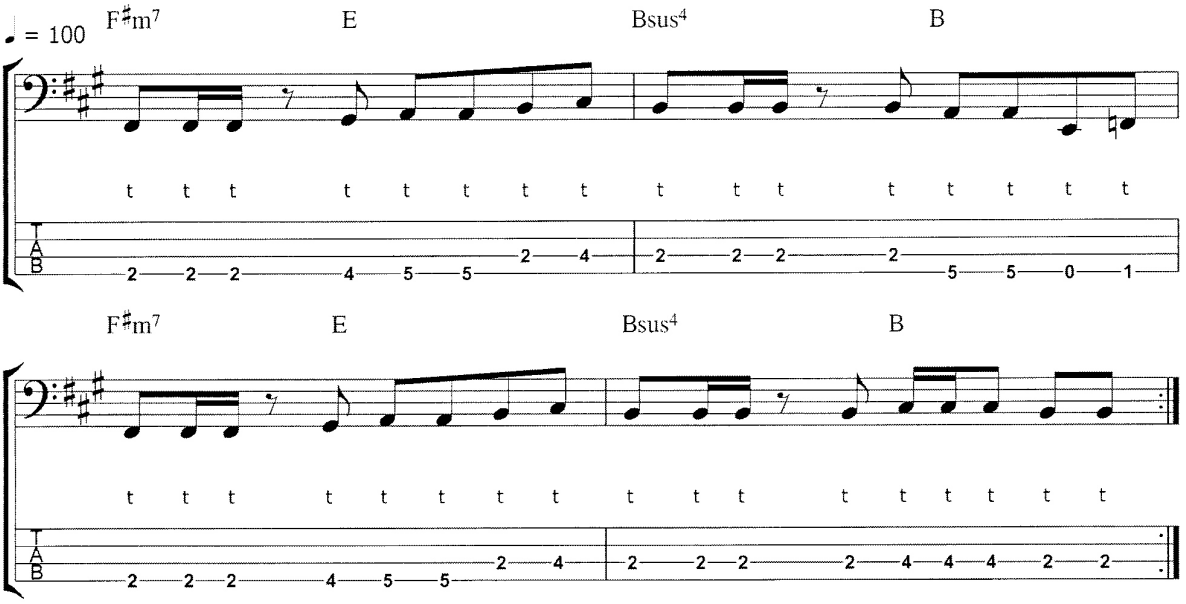
This exercise features a lot of space. Space is an excellent musical device in any style as it allows the music to breathe. When used in the context of your slap lines it can make things even more funky. Be careful with this one, some of the rhythms are tricky to play accurately, particularly the sixteenth note that anticipates the third beat in bars 1 and 3.



Exercise 14

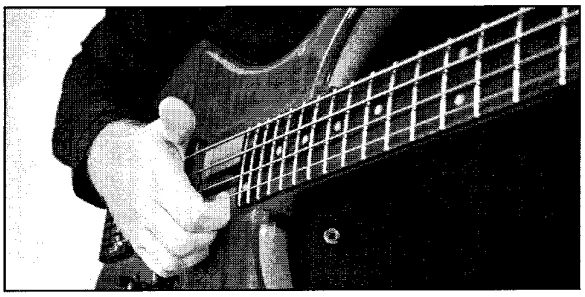
CD 1: Track 14

Finally, here's a groove that features a few sixteenth notes - it's also rather reminiscent of 'The Sun Goes Down' by Level 42. This kind of line is quite common, so be sure to learn it in other keys so that you can use it where appropriate. It's a good idea to build up a repertoire of licks that you know in all keys - that way you always have material to call on when coming up with lines of your own.



Chapter 2

Adding the 'Pop'



Slapping of course is only half of the technique, the other half being the 'pop'. The pop is a note that is plucked - with some force - with either the first or second finger. It's these popped notes that really give the slap and pop technique its funky and rather unique sound.

To pop a string, you simply hook your finger underneath it slightly, and pluck it firmly. This can take a little practise since you want to do it hard enough to achieve the desired effect without running the risk of breaking strings! (I certainly broke more than a few when I was learning this technique!) In the photograph you can see the correct hand position for popping the G string.

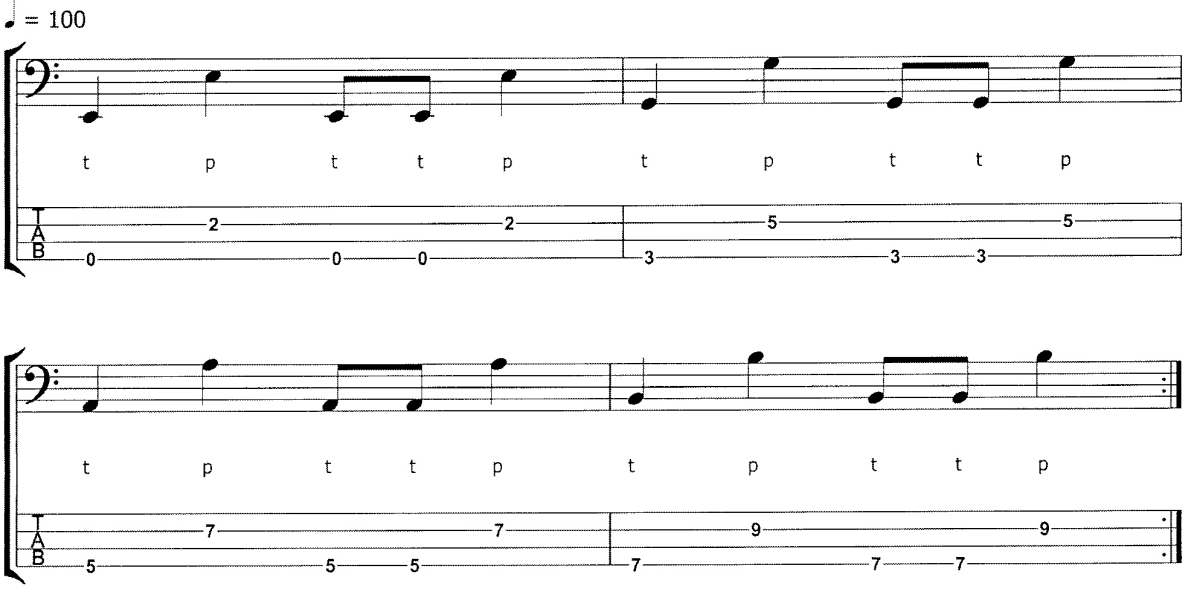
After you pop the string be careful that your hand doesn't move too far away from the bass, since your thumb will need to be in position to slap the strings again. As discussed in the previous chapter, most of the time you will slap the E and A strings and pop the D and G strings.

In these slap and pop exercises, we're going to be popping the octaves of each slapped note. Octaves are by far the most popular choice when popping notes, and all of the popped notes in this section will be octaves. We'll look at what other notes we can use later in the book.

Exercise 15

CD 1: Track 15

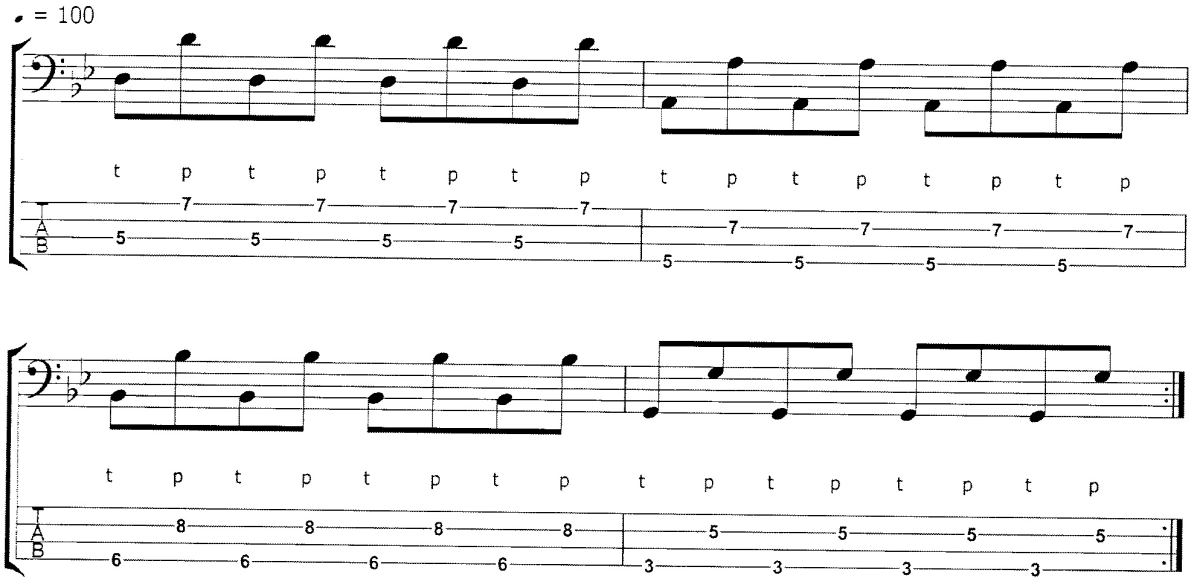
This exercise is quite simple, and follows a very basic slap and pop pattern. It may take you a little while to get used to popping the D string, as the G will be in the way. Perseverance is the key here - don't move on until you have mastered this exercise. To get the most out of it, I recommend transposing it up a fourth and playing it from the open A string.



Exercise 16

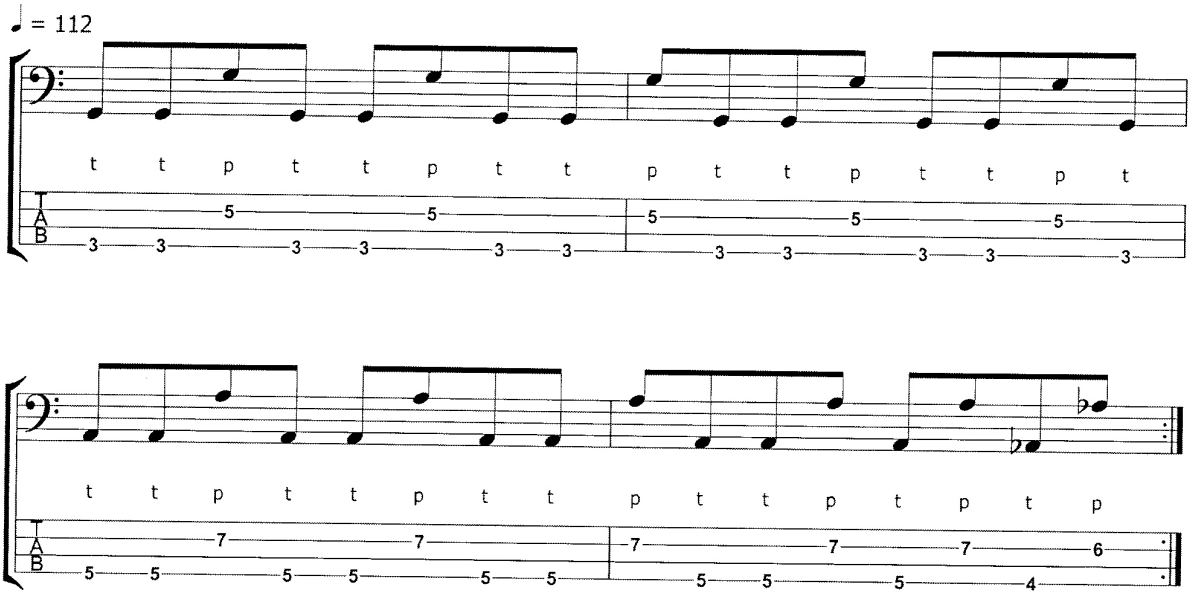
CD 1: Track 16

This exercise is a continuous eighth note line that requires you to pop notes on both the D and G strings. This continuously alternating slap and pop pattern is quite common. Try to get all the notes to ring clearly as you can hear on the CD.



Exercise 17

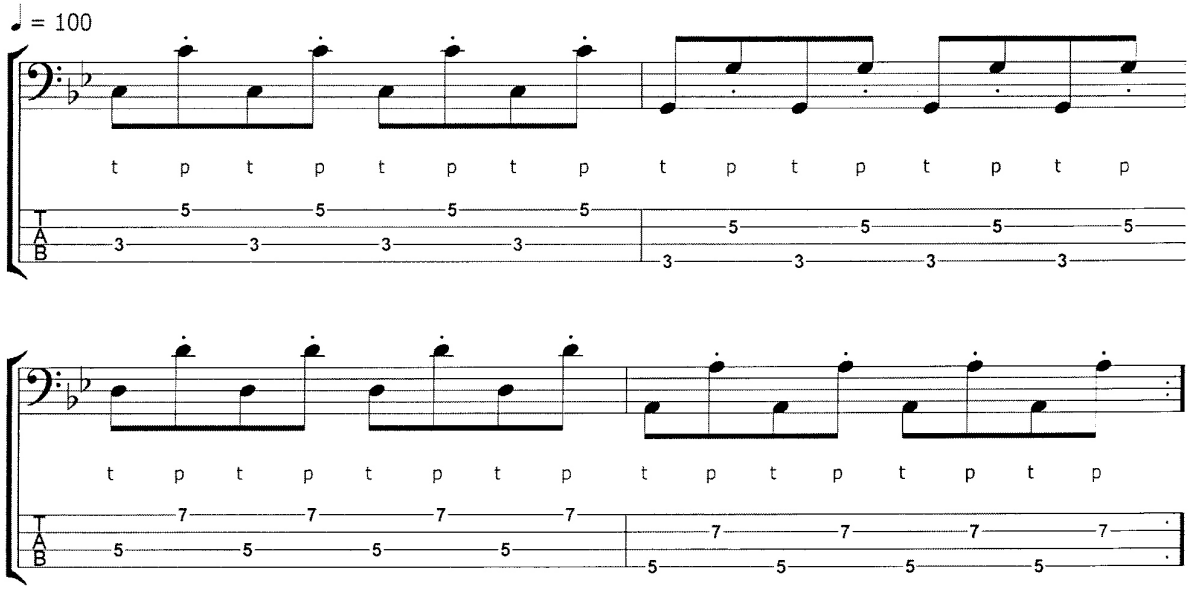
Here's an exercise that make use of a slightly more unusual slap and pop pattern - it's also a little faster than the previous one.



Exercise 18

CD 1: Track 17

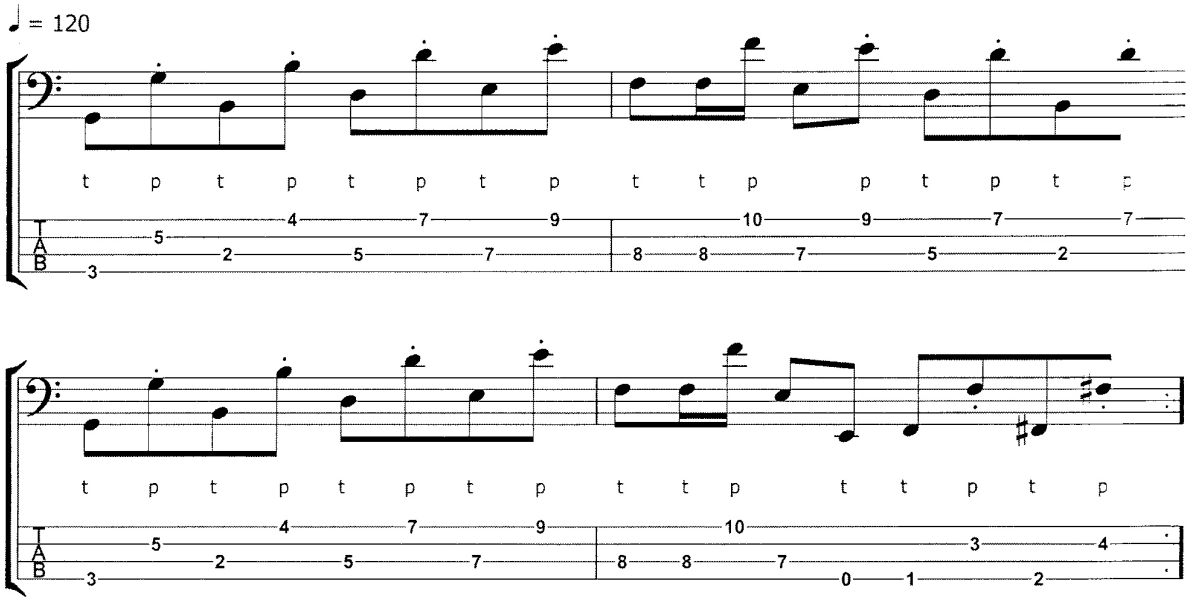
We can also apply the muting technique that we learnt in Chapter 1 to popped notes. In this exercise we have another eighth note line, but each popped note has been made staccato. As I explained before, to shorten the length of a note, you simply need to lift your fretting finger off the string very slightly. Note that although I have notated staccato marks again here, they will not always be written and how you play lines like this will be left to your discretion.



Exercise 19

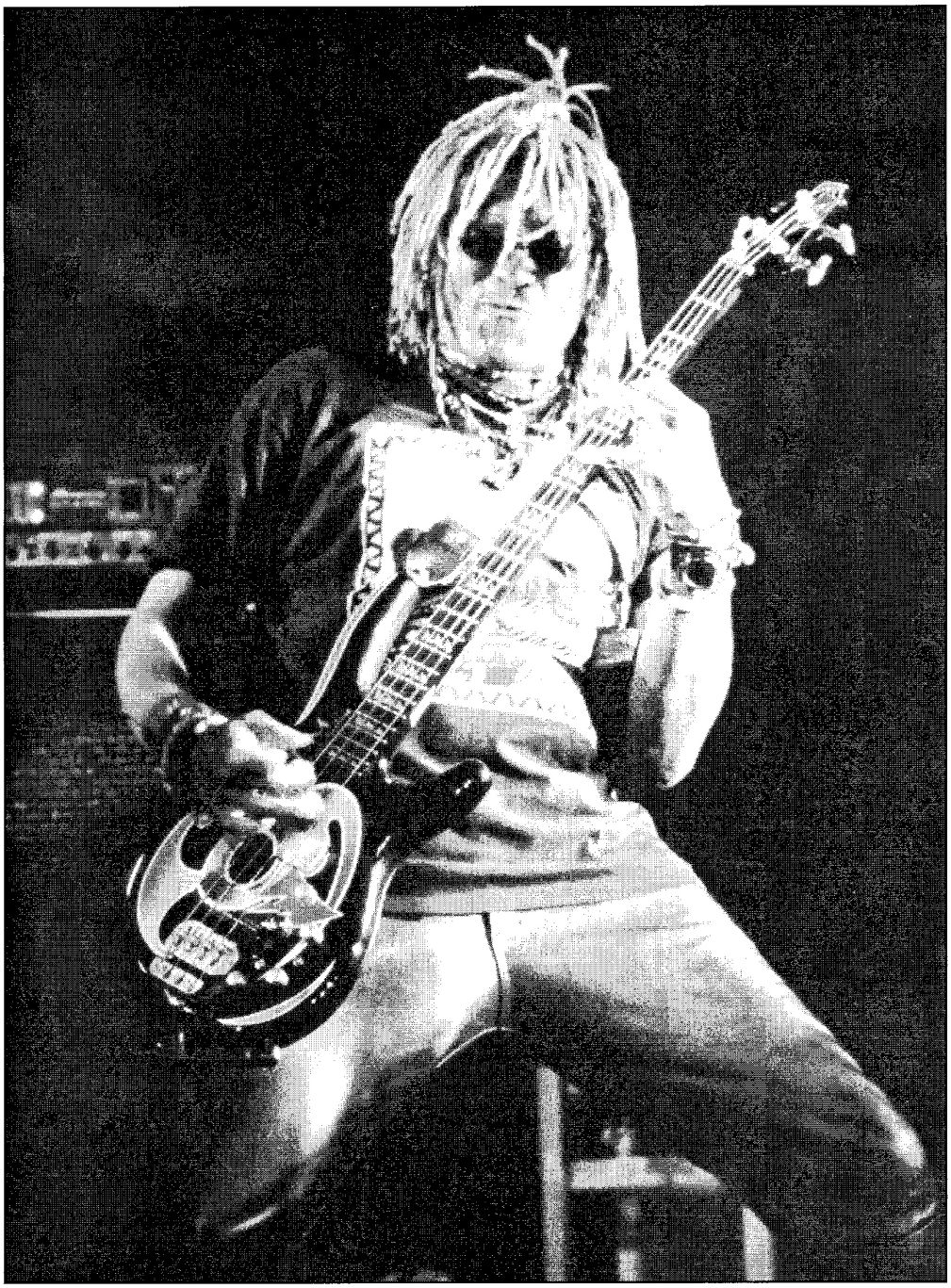
CD 1: Track 18

Here's a faster exercise in which the popped notes should be played staccato. You should also play this exercise and the previous one without staccato popped notes to see what difference it makes to the groove. You will hear that they are much more effective with the staccato notes. Take your time with this one.



Chapter Summary

Over the next 2 pages are a selection of simple slap and pop basslines. You will find that the two parts of the technique you have learnt so far are all that are needed to play many rock/pop slap parts. While things may get more complicated in later chapters it's worth remembering that these simpler, more groove orientated exercises are typically all that is required of a slapped line. With that in mind, make sure that you get all the exercises in this chapter firmly under your belt before moving on to the next.



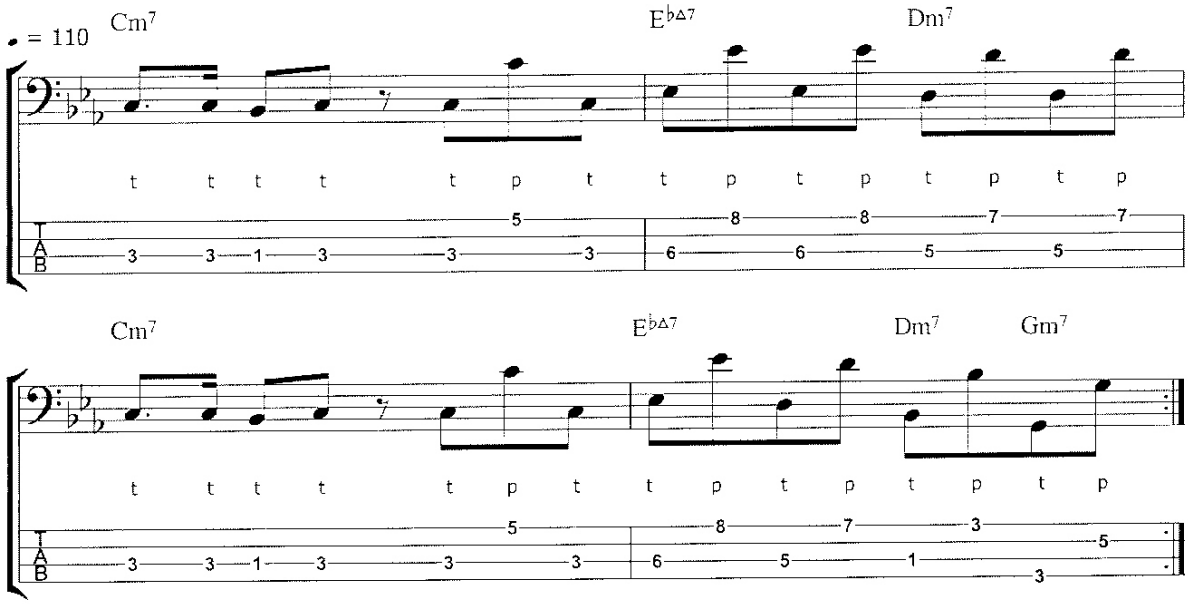
T.M. Stevens *Photo courtesy of Bass Guitar Magazine*

Chapter 2 - Exercise Area

Exercise 20

CD 1: Track 19

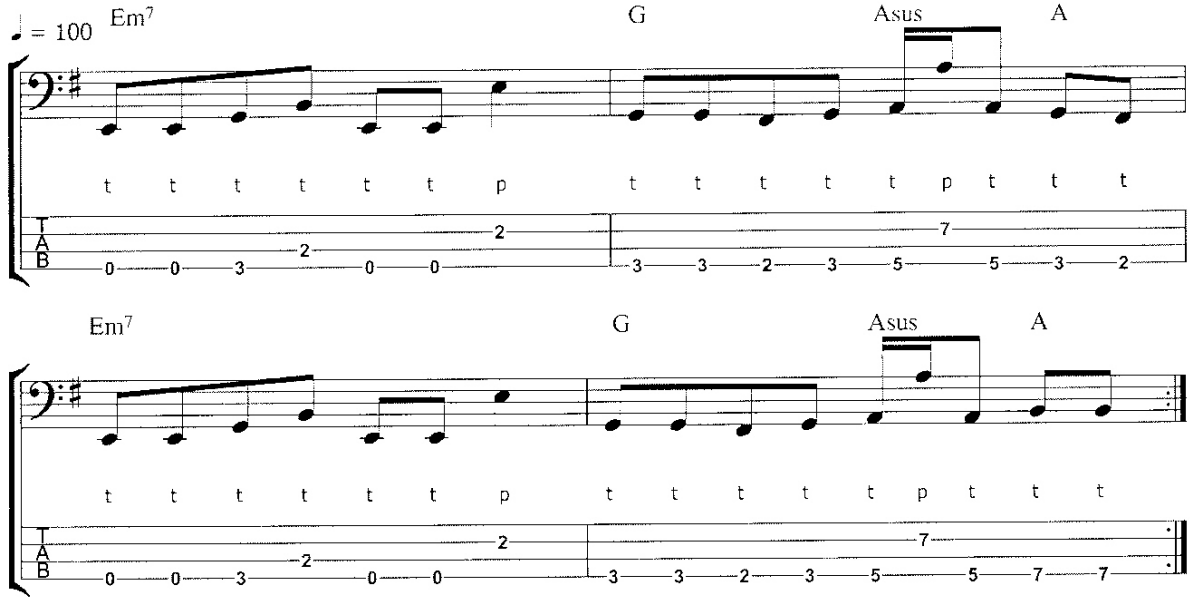
Here's a line with a strong groove to it. Notice both the use of an eighth note rest in bars 1 and 3, and how the fourth bar is a development of the second.



Exercise 21

CD 1: Track 20

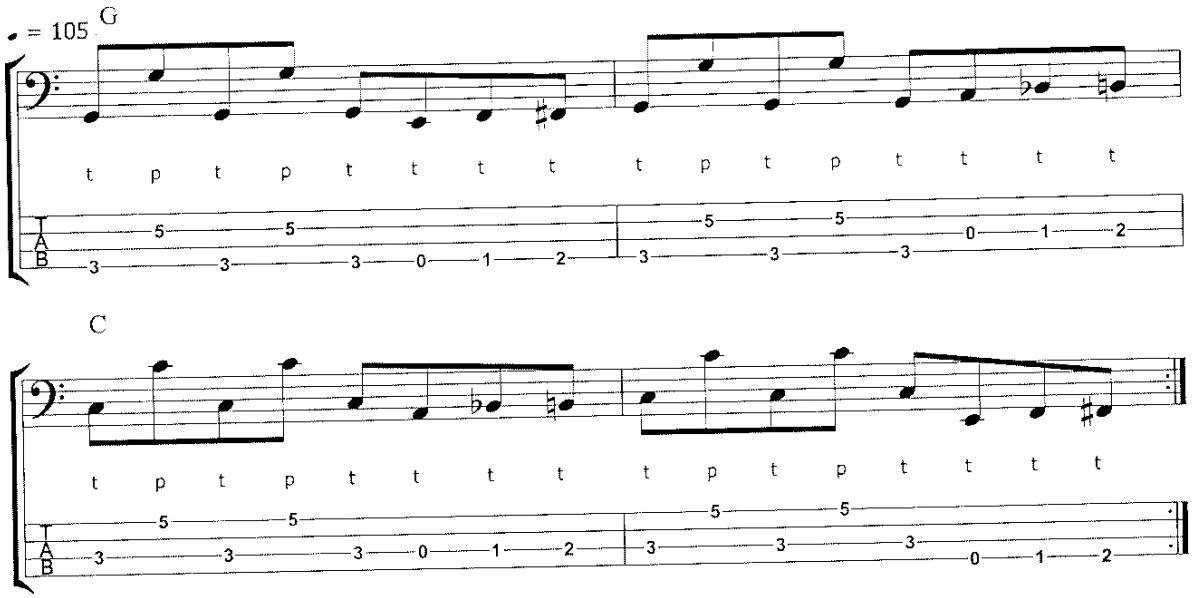
This exercise is more difficult than it looks. You'll hear that I have applied some left hand muting to the open E's, although it isn't notated on the score. There is a sixteenth note figure in bars 2 and 4 that is played as a combination of slaps and pops. This is a very common figure in the slap and pop technique.



Exercise 22

CD 1: Track 21

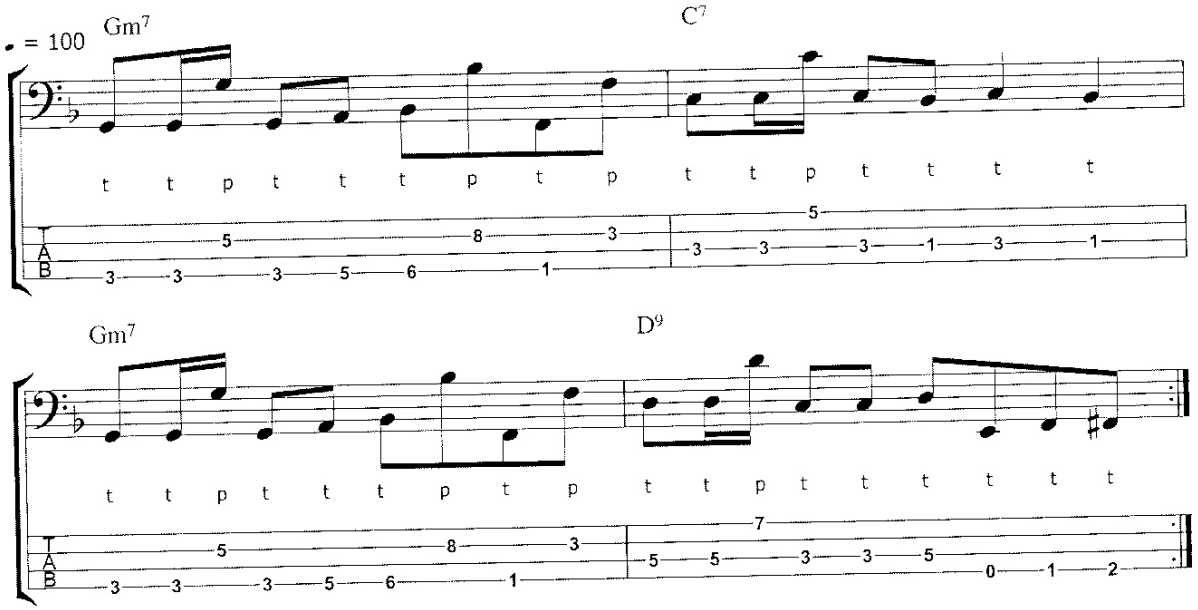
This line is a simple octave exercise with some ascending chromatic fills in the second half of each bar. The popped notes have been played staccato, although they have not been notated as such.



Exercise 23

CD 1: Track 22

There are a few sixteenth notes in this exercise, making it a more difficult line to play. Note the classic chromatic fill being used again in the fourth bar.



Chapter 3

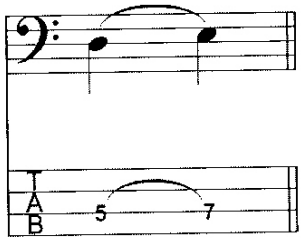
Using Hammer-Ons, Pull-Offs and Trills

With both slapping and popping now covered we can look at adding some extra spice to what we're playing. One of the ways to do this is to introduce some phrasing techniques. You'll probably already be familiar with the devices we're going to look at in this chapter since they are commonplace in all other bass playing styles.

All of the techniques we'll look at in this chapter are types of slur. A slur is defined as *'a curved line written over two notes indicating that they are to be played legato or in the same stroke.'* Basically, you play the string once but get two or more notes. The two most common types of slurs, and certainly two you'll have heard of are the hammer-on and pull-off. For those of you not familiar with these devices, allow me to explain.

The Hammer-On

To perform a hammer-on, a note is played, then another left hand finger literally 'hammers' on another note further up on the same string. Using this technique you can play two or more notes after only plucking the string once. Try this example:

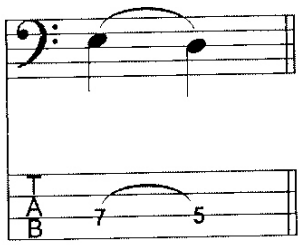


Play the D at the fifth fret of your A string - use the first finger of your left hand to fret the note. Once you have played the note, bring either the third or fourth finger of your left hand down onto the E at the seventh fret. You'll need to do this quite firmly to produce a strong note, and you should aim for both notes to be of equal volume. Since you have four left hand fingers, you can probably see that it is possible to hammer-on two or three notes in succession. Exercises 24 and 25 will illustrate how hammer-ons can be used in slap bass.

The Pull-Off

The pull-off is the mirror opposite of the hammer-on. As you can see from the example below, the higher note - in this case the E at the seventh fret is played first. The finger fretting the E then lifts up allowing the fretted D at the fifth fret to sound. Obviously you need to have your first finger in position at the D before you pull-off.

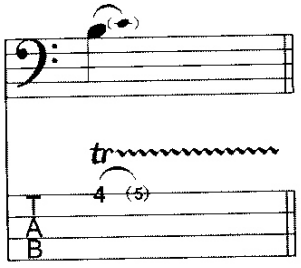
Exercises 26 and 27 will demonstrate how to put this technique to use.



The Trill

A trill is a combination of hammer-ons and pull-offs played in rapid succession. As in the other examples, only the first note is struck - the rest of the notes are created by repeatedly hammering-on and pulling-off. A trill is indicated by the letters *tr* over a note, followed by a wavy line. A trill lasts for the duration of the note it is written over.

Exercises 28 and 29 will demonstrate how to put the trill to use.

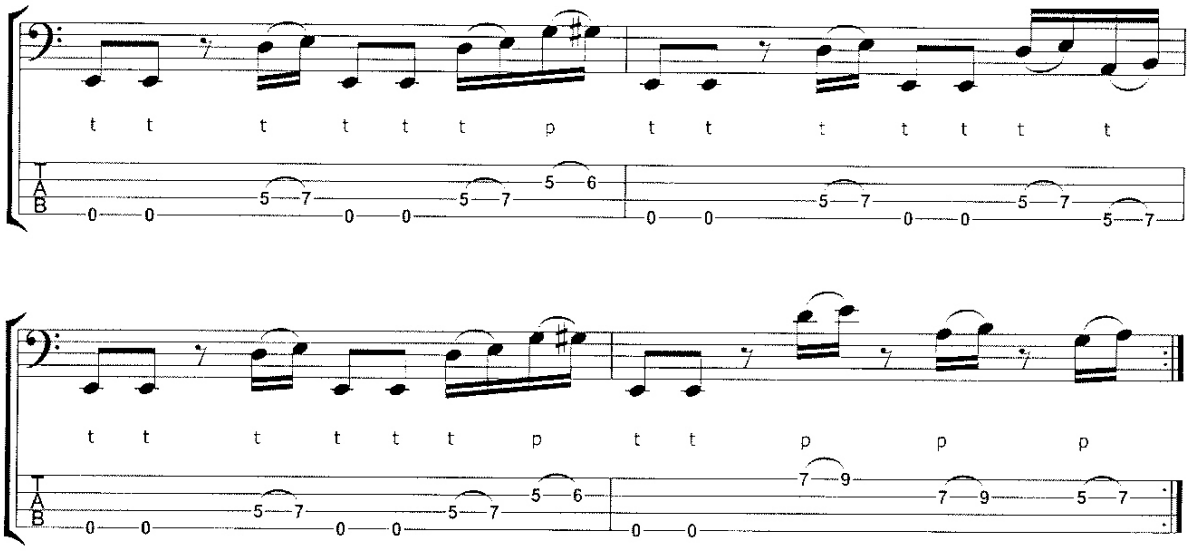


Exercise 24

CD 1: Track 23

This exercise demonstrates some of the most commonly used hammer-on figures in slap bass and you will no doubt recognise them from many well known slap lines. In Chapter 5 we'll look more closely at figures such as this, together with the scales and note choices often used for the slap and pop technique.

♩ = 100

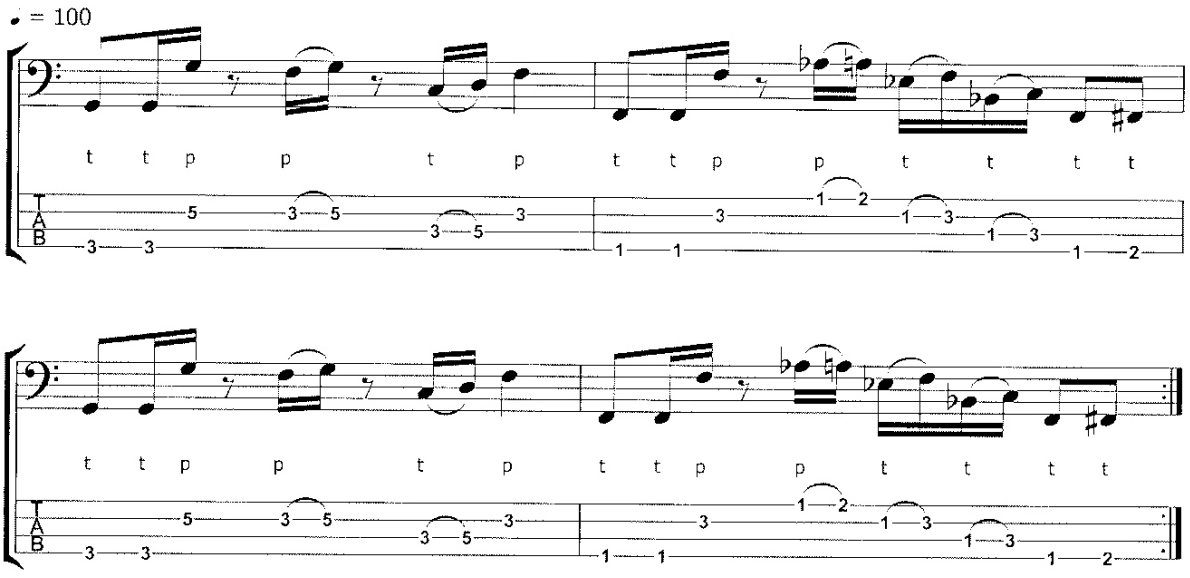


Exercise 25

CD 1: Track 24

This repeated two bar line is classic funk and is slightly more complicated than the previous exercise. Bars 2 and 4 feature a descending hammer-on part that works well for lines like this. You should remember this fill so that you can use it in your own lines.

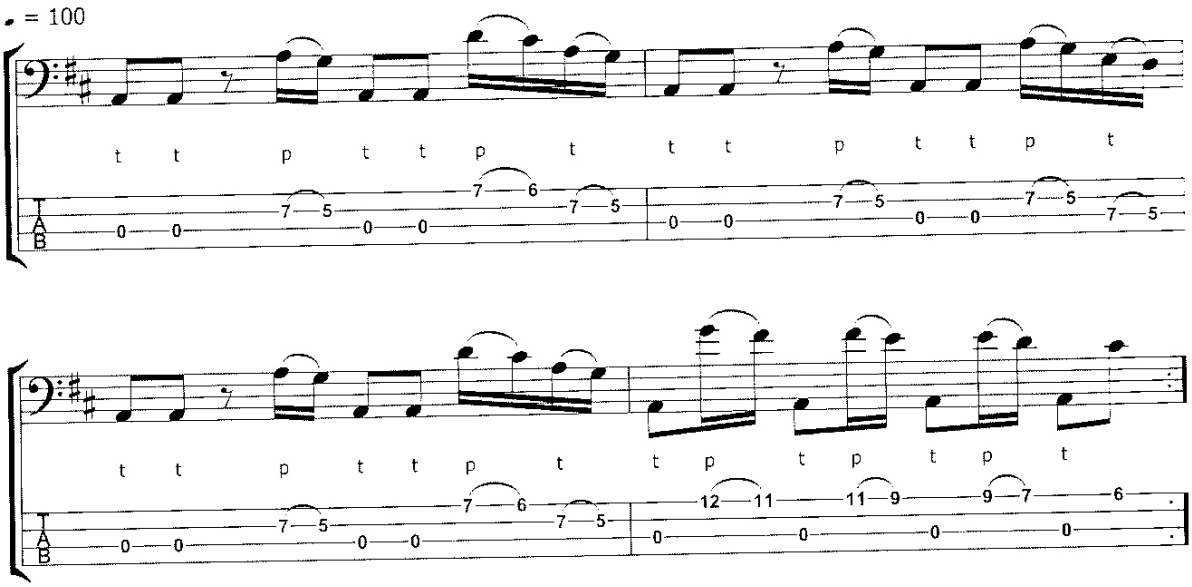
♩ = 100



Exercise 26

CD 1: Track 25

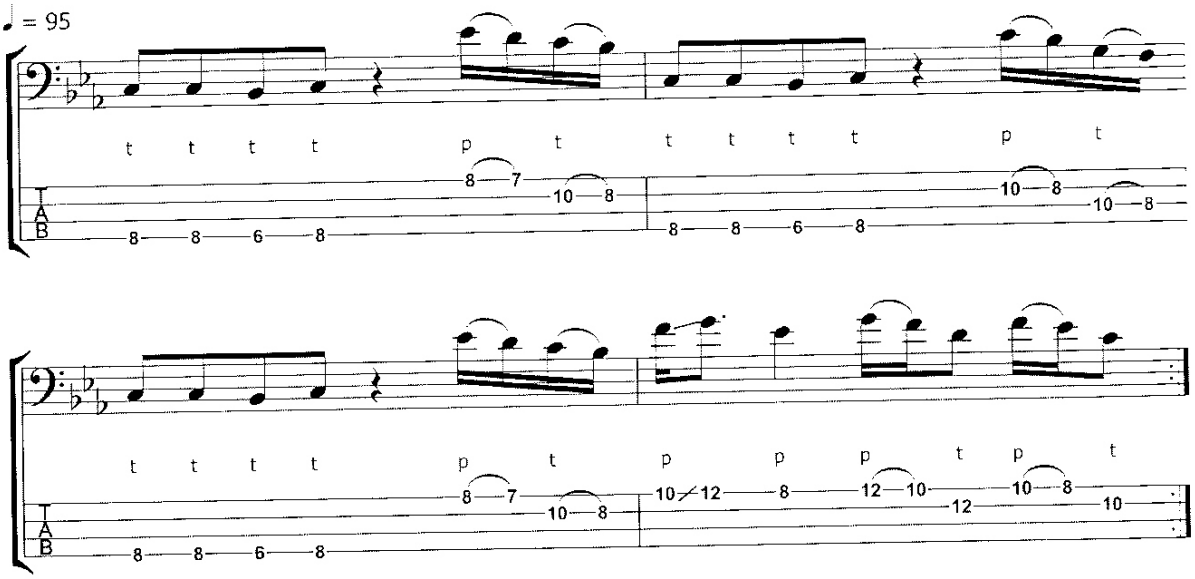
This exercise makes use of pull-offs and is similar to the first hammer-on exercise. It features some classic pull-off figures that are commonly used when playing with the slap and pop technique. Try to let the A string continue ringing underneath the notes in the last bar.



Exercise 27

CD 1: Track 26

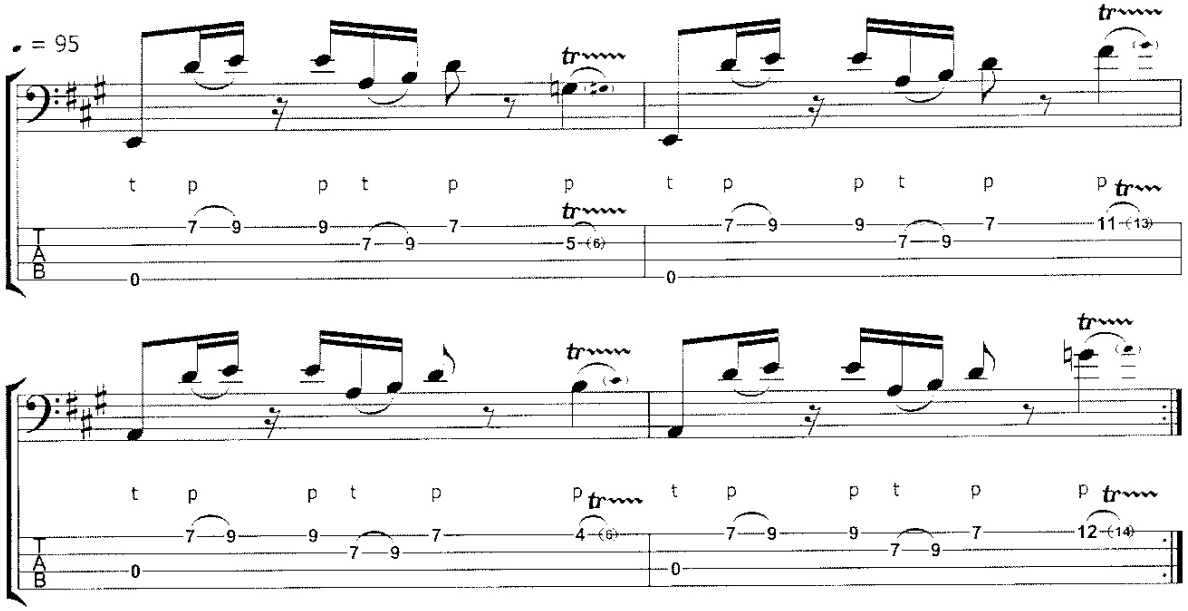
This is another slap and pop line that makes use of pull-offs. You'll see some of the figures from the previous exercise appearing in this one as well.



Exercise 28

CD 1: Track 27

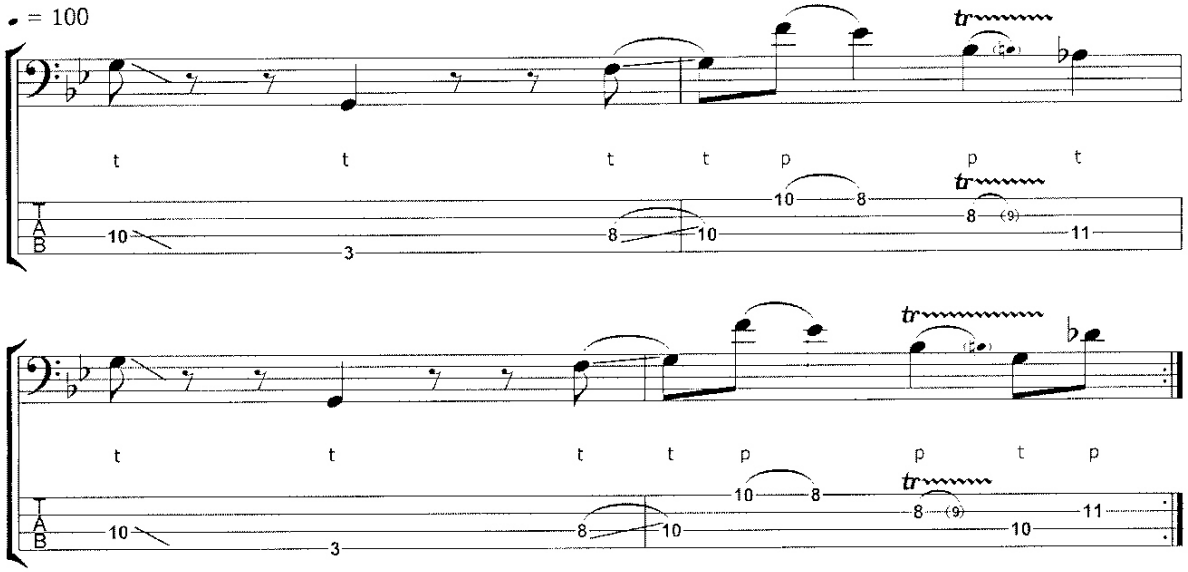
This exercise features trills, with a few hammer-ons thrown in for good measure. You can probably already hear that adding hammer-ons, pull-offs and trills into our slap lines makes them a lot more interesting.



Exercise 29

CD 1: Track 28

The line is more sparse and really allows the trill to shine as a decoration. Timing is crucial to the groove here, so be sure to practise along to the track.

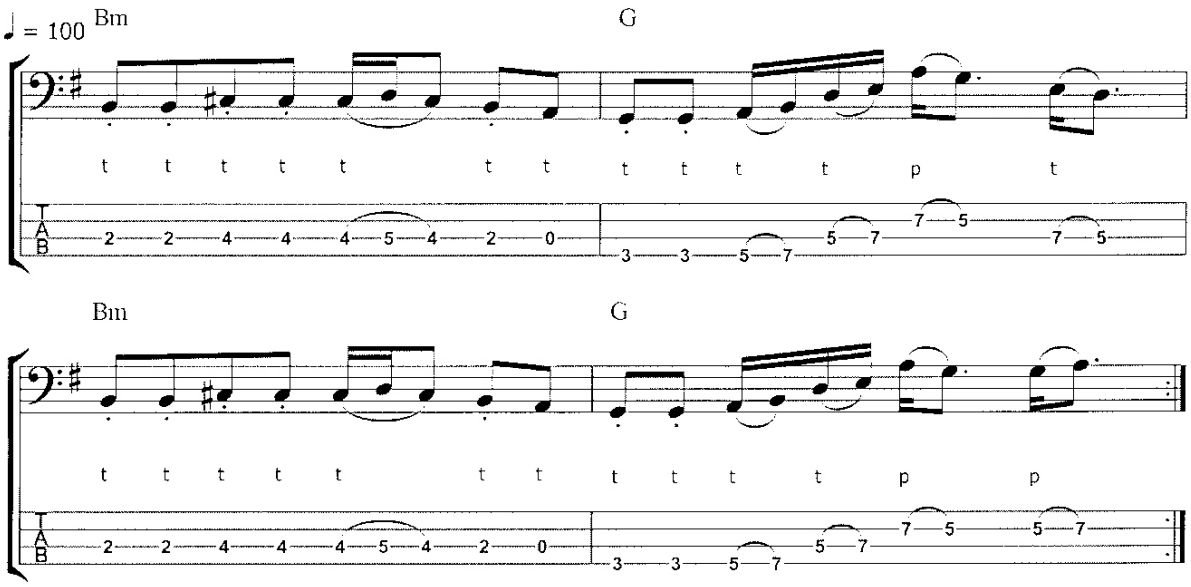


Chapter Summary

Now that you have learnt how to use these devices, it's time to look at some exercises that will help you practise them. Remember that the notes that are hammered-on/pulled-off need to be equal in volume to the notes that are struck.

Exercise 30

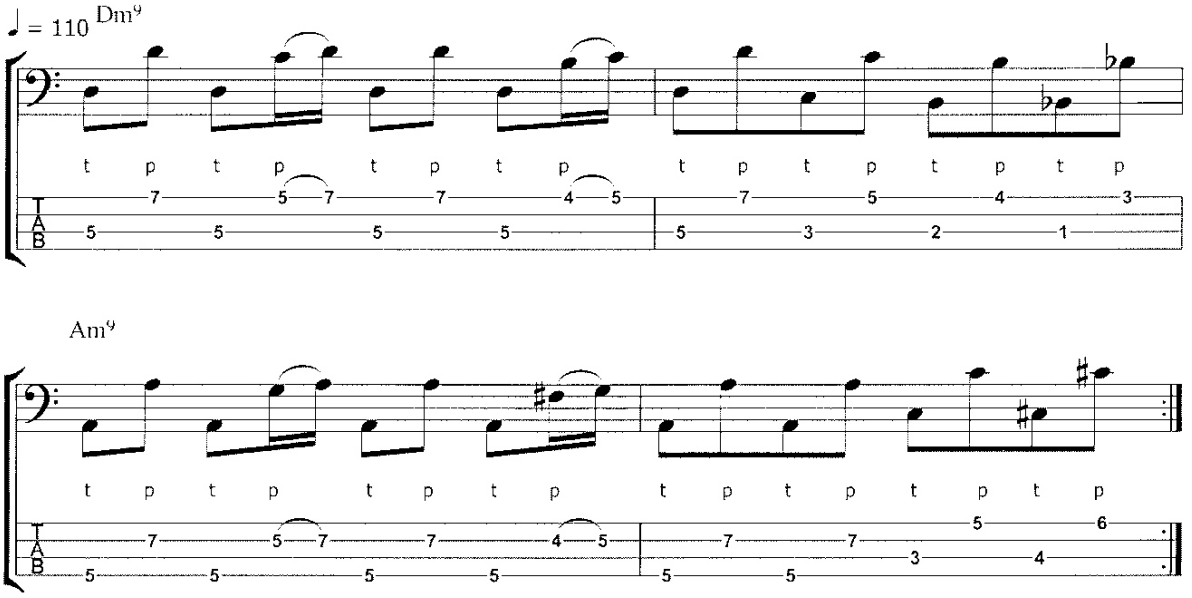
The first two bars of this exercise feature a hammer-on and a pull-off one after the other. Remember that as notated in the slap guides, only the first note is struck - the remaining two are played by the left hand. Note the use of staccato marks throughout the exercise - try to adhere to these, they really help the line groove.



Exercise 31

CD 1: Track 29

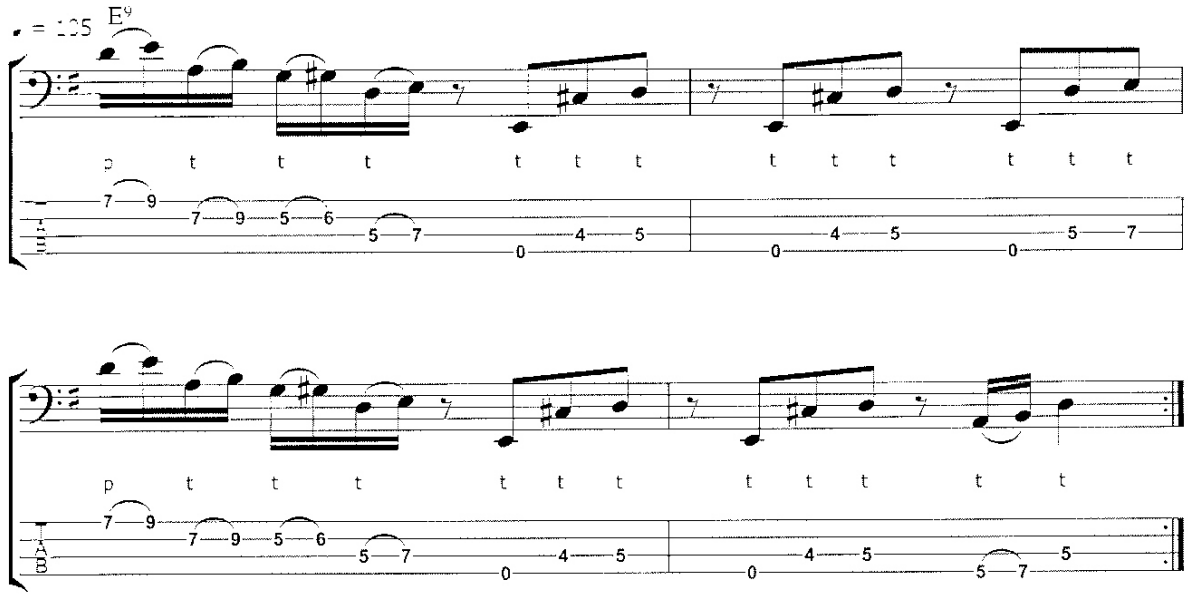
This exercise is a simple octave slap and pop line with a few hammer-ons thrown in for good measure. You should experiment with making some of the popped notes in this exercise staccato to see what a difference it makes to the feel.



Exercise 32

CD 1: Track 30

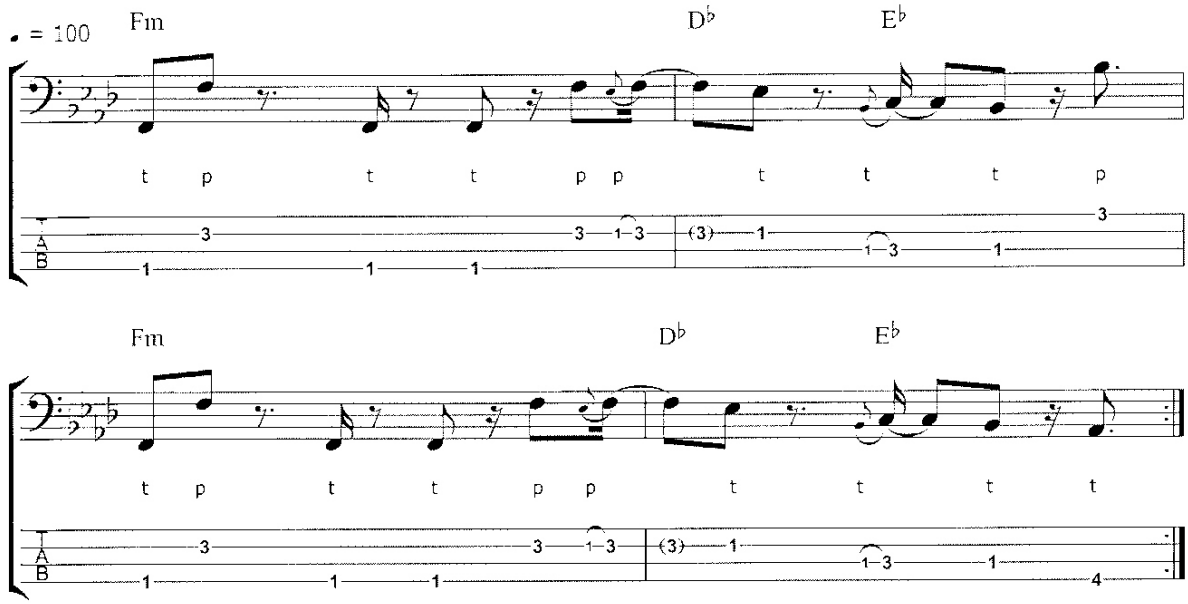
This exercise features a series of descending hammer-ons at the beginning of the first and third bars. This is a popular slap bass figure, and makes use of the minor pentatonic scale. If you're not familiar with the minor pentatonic scale, you can find out all about it and other popular scales used for slap in Chapter 5. Note the use of eighth note rests here. Again, these allow the line to breathe, which makes for a better groove. Your left hand muting will need to be very accurate here in order to play the rests as written.



Exercise 33

CD 1: Track 31

This exercise features some tricky syncopation. The first note of each hammer-on is a grace note so it needs to be played very quickly. Listen closely to the track to help get both the timing and phrasing of this one accurate.

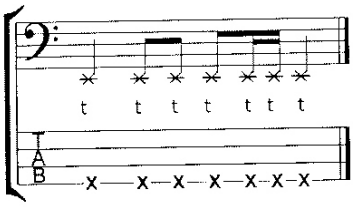


Chapter 4

Ghost Notes

The final basic element of the slap and pop technique is the ghost note. Ghost notes are by no means exclusive to slap and pop and are commonplace in many other playing styles as well. For those of you who don't know, a ghost note is a pitchless note that can be used to add more rhythmic interest to a bassline.

Ghost notes are played in exactly the same way as any other note - they can be played with the fingers, with a pick, or slapped/popped. The difference is in the left hand technique. By lifting the left hand off of the note slightly, (in a similar way to how we mute a note) we can prevent the string from ringing and therefore create a note that is essentially pitchless. On the CD you can hear me slapping some ghost notes on the E string:



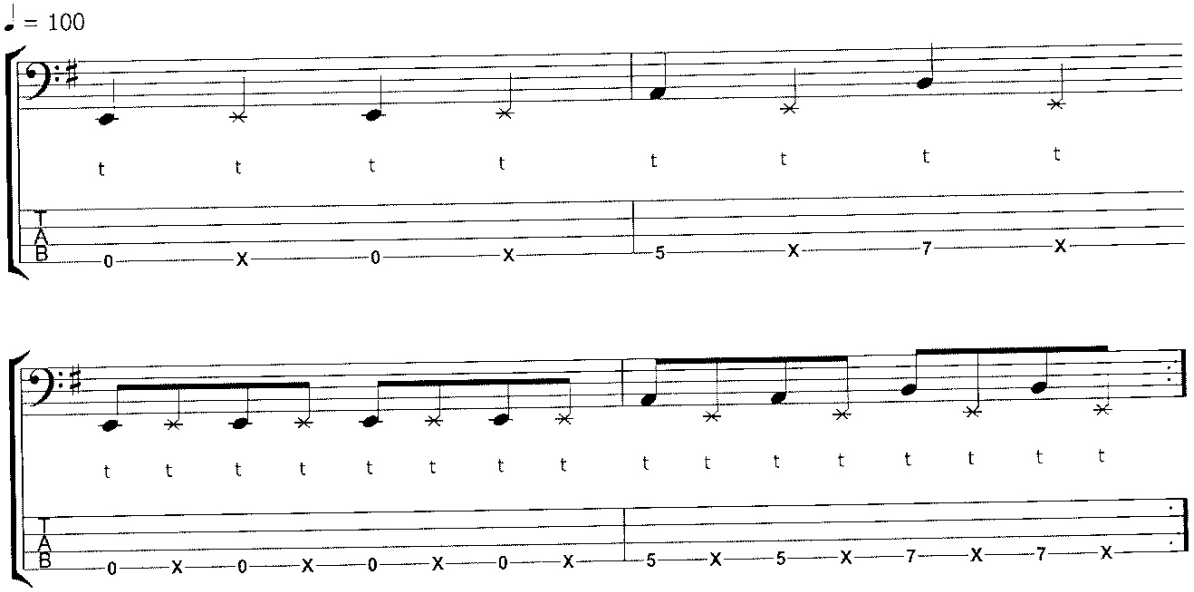
CD 1: Track 32

TIP! The right hand slap technique is the same as before, you're just muting with the left hand. As you can see, ghost notes are written on the stave in the same way as normal notes, but with crosses instead of noteheads. Note that throughout this book ghost notes are always notated on the string on which they should be played. Technically it doesn't matter where you play them, but I have notated them on the easiest string to play them within the context of the exercise.

Exercise 34

CD 1: Track 33

In this exercise we are going to alternate between playing pitched notes and ghost notes. We'll start with a quarter note rhythm in the first two bars and move onto an eighth note rhythm in the second two bars.

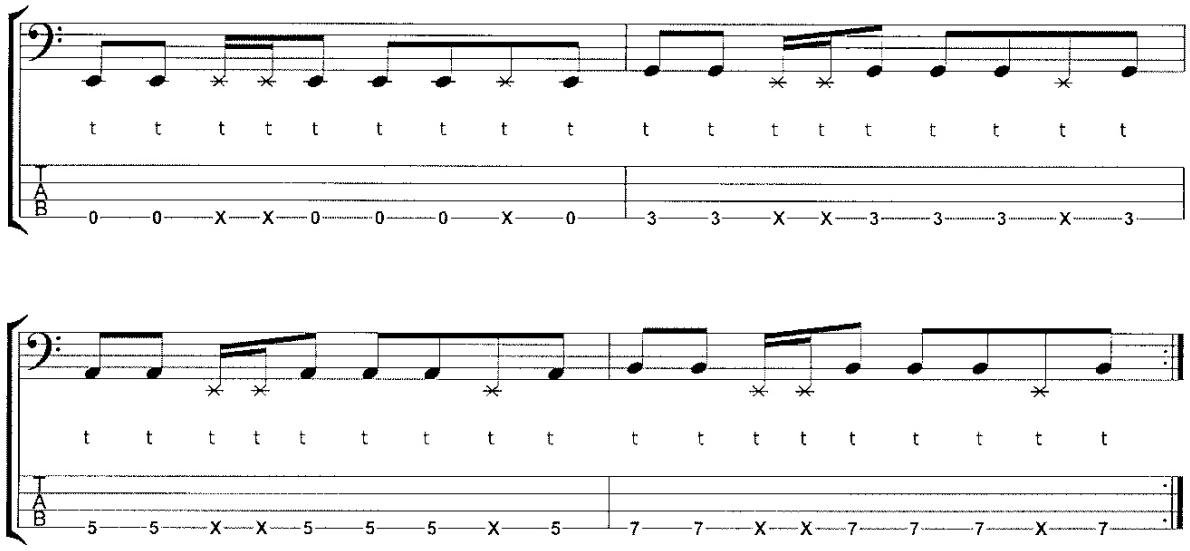


Exercise 35

CD 1: Track 34

Ghost notes are excellent for making a line more rhythmically interesting. In this exercise I have inserted just a few to liven up the line.

♩ = 100

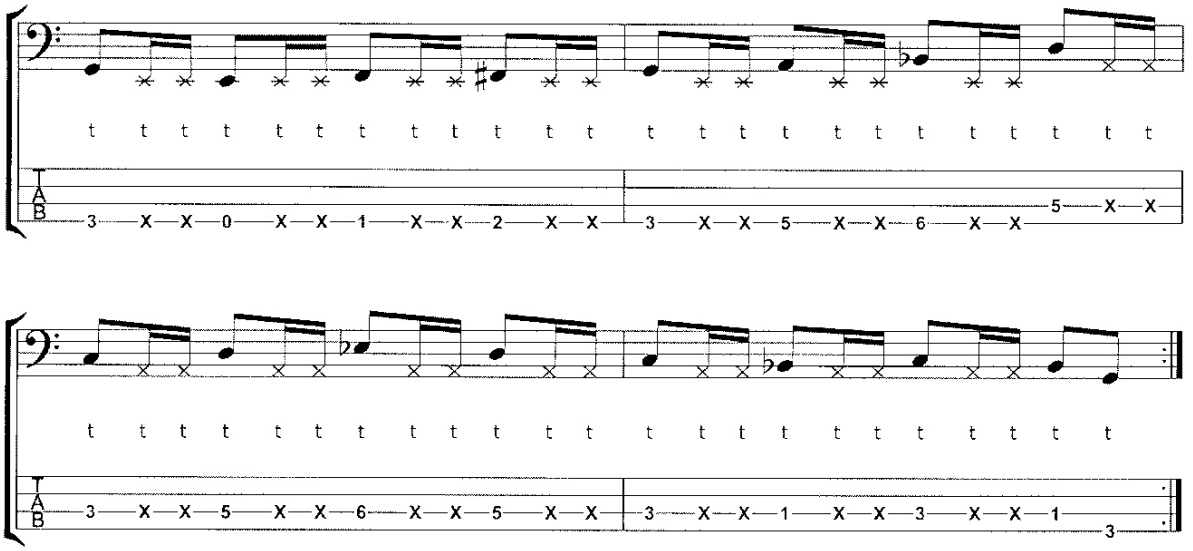


Exercise 36

CD 1: Track 35

In this exercise each note is followed by two sixteenth note ghost notes to create a 'chugging' rhythm. This is a very common use of the ghost note in the slap style. Your thumb will need to work a little harder with this one, but as always, the key is to keep your arm relaxed. It's a good idea to practise lines like these every day in order to build up the strength and stamina required to play them.

♩ = 110

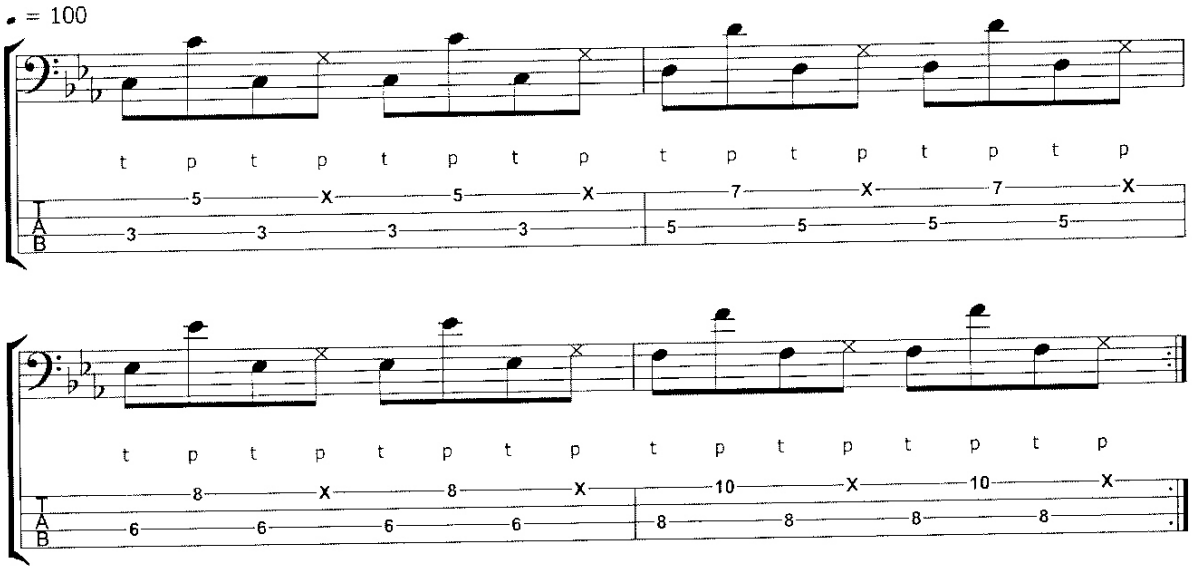


We can also pop ghost notes. This is done in exactly the same way as popping normal notes, but the left hand once again prevents the notes from ringing properly.

Exercise 37

CD 1: Track 36

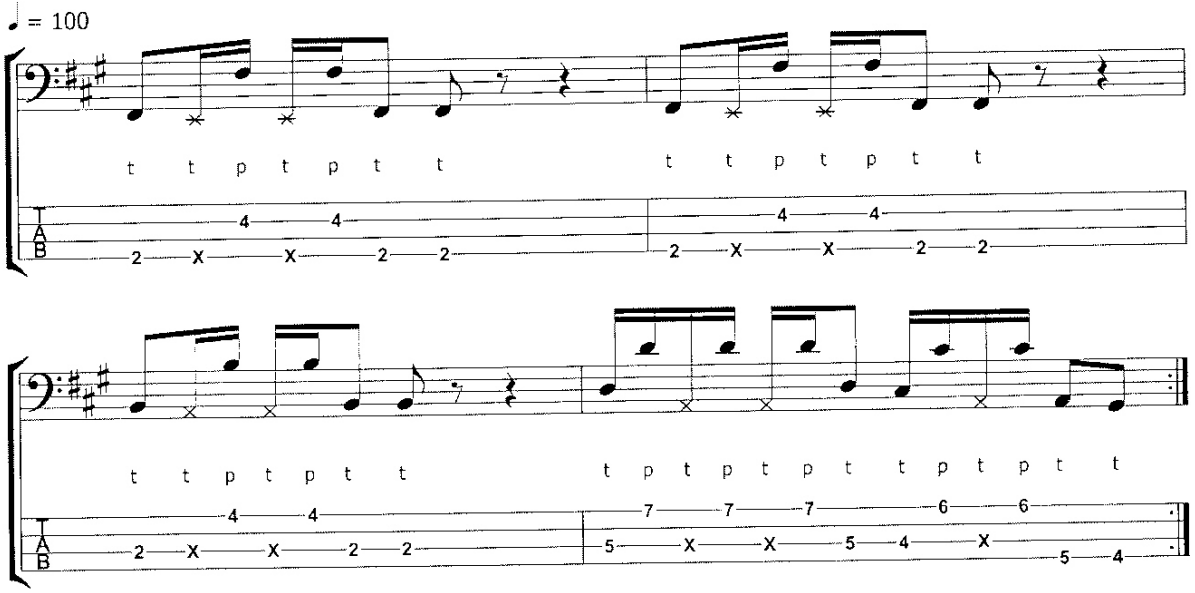
This is an exercise that uses popped ghost notes. Be careful with this one - it can sometimes be difficult to alternate between popping pitched notes and ghost notes.



Exercise 38

CD 1: Track 37

Slapped ghost notes also work well between pops. In this exercise the thumb bounces between the pops, creating a sixteenth note rhythmic feel that not only sounds great, but also is actually made easier because of the ghost notes. Take your time with the figure in the fourth bar - it is quite complex. I recommend spending the time required to get the exercise right - you'll frequently see these slap and pop figures cropping up throughout the book.



I find that the thing I practice most is making whatever I am playing feel as good as possible. My main focus is playing in the pocket. A solid pocket is what I find most people appreciate about a great bassist.

NATHAN EAST

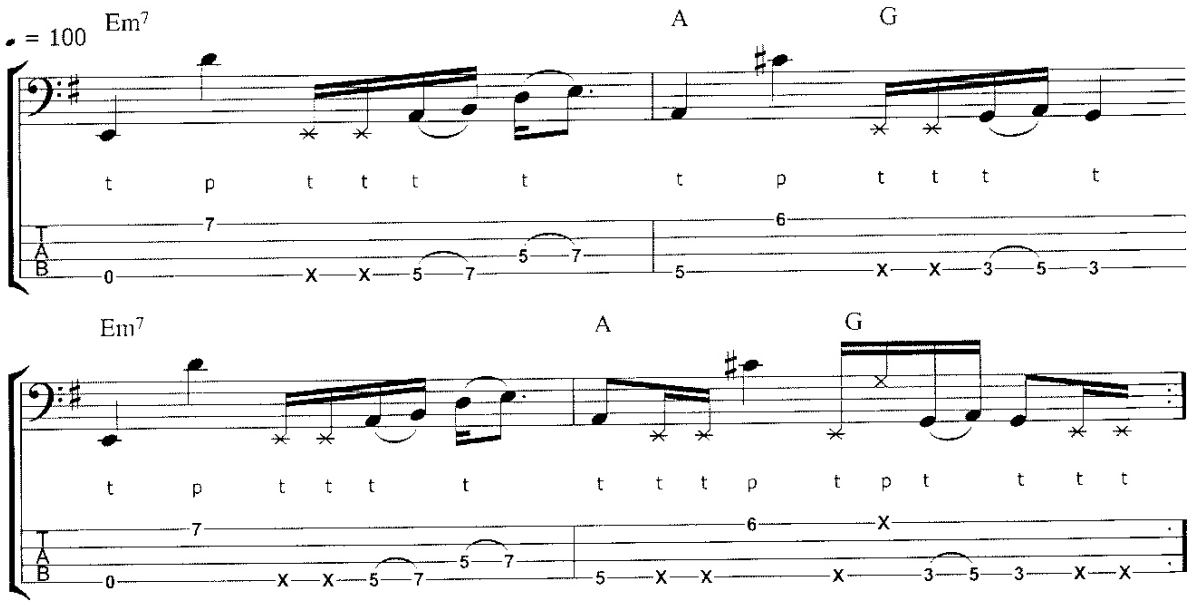
Chapter Summary

Hopefully, you can see that ghost notes - although a simple concept - can add a lot of style and excitement to a slap line. In fact, you'll find that because they are so useful, every exercise from this point on makes use of them! So now that we have examined how to use them, let's look at a selection of bass parts that put them to good use.

Exercise 39

CD 1: Track 38

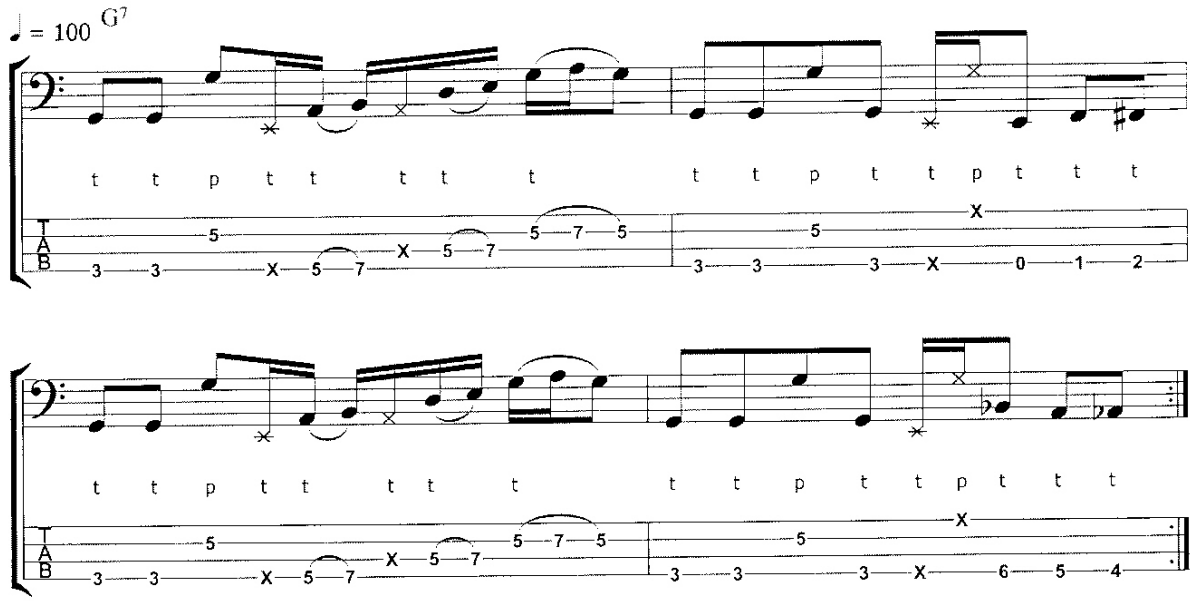
This exercise is quite slow and uses two ghost notes as a prelude to the E string hammer-on in each bar. Note the extra ghost notes added to the fourth bar: the pitched notes are the same as in bar 2 but I have filled in some of the gaps between them with ghost notes to keep things interesting.



Exercise 40

CD 1: Track 39

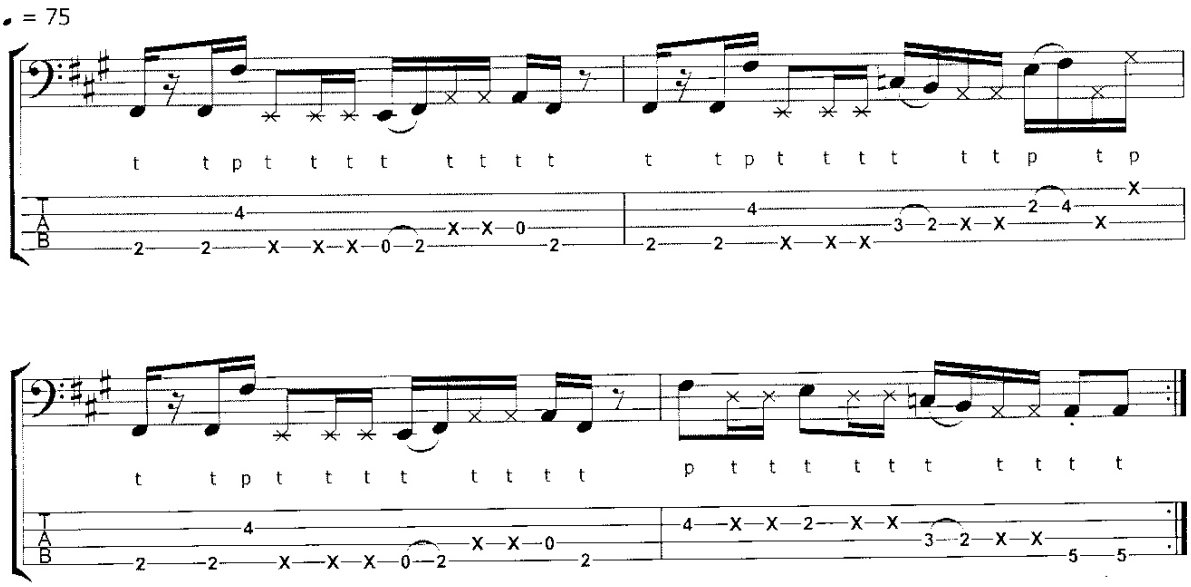
This busy exercise features ghost notes in between hammer-ons in the first and third bars. These ghost notes help to fill up the line and enable the thumb to bounce nicely onto the next note. The popped ghost notes in the second and fourth bars are rhythmic figures that feel natural to play at this point in the line.



Exercise 41

CD 1: Track 40

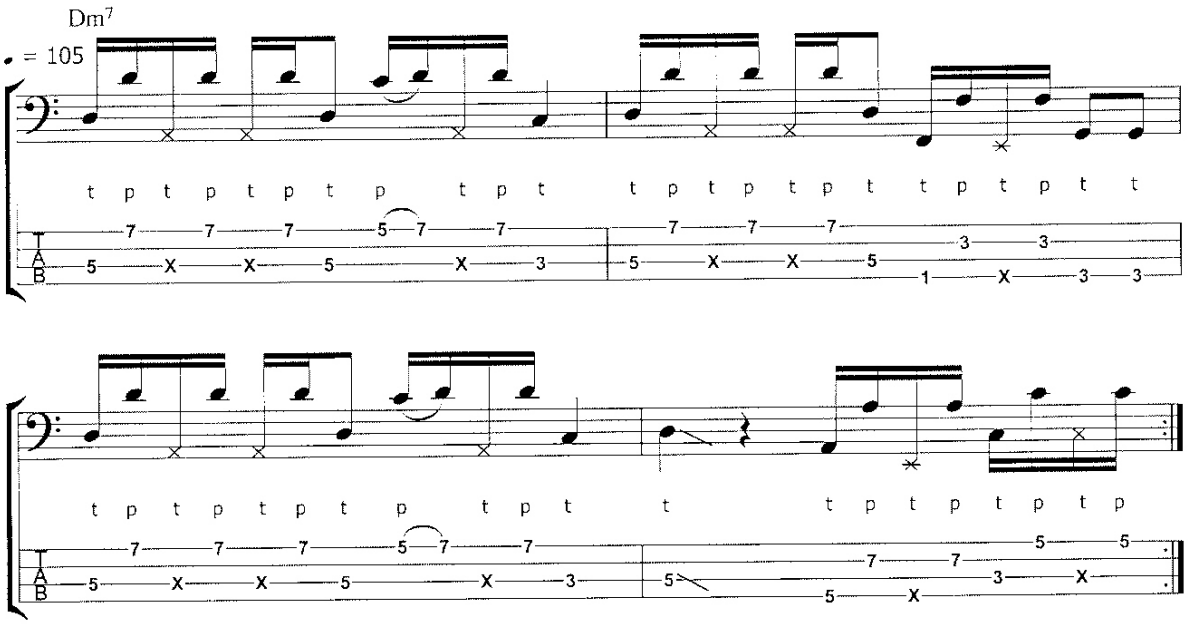
Ghost notes are used to add a percussive effect here. This is similar to the way a guitarist would fill in the gaps of a riff such as this and works well in this kind of slow rock groove. This one may look difficult on paper but as you'll hear the tempo is considerably slower than the previous exercises.



Exercise 42

CD 1: Track 41

This is a more difficult exercise. Once again the thumb needs to bounce off the A string, playing ghost notes in between all the popped notes. Take this one slowly, and be sure to listen closely to the CD for guidance.



Chapter 5

Popular Scales and Modes for Slap Bass

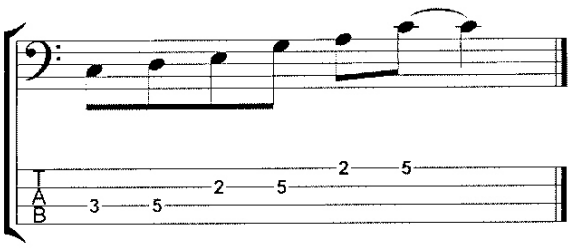
While it's true that no technique should dictate the notes that are used to create music, slap bass has become strongly associated with funk music, and the scales and modes that are common to that style. Pentatonic runs, bluesy slurs and tritone doublestops are all cornerstones of both the funk style and of the slap and pop technique, and it is the theory behind these devices that will be examined in this chapter. Understanding the hows and whys of these devices will enable you to incorporate them into your slap playing, and allow you to create your own basslines with them. In writing this chapter I have assumed that you have a working knowledge of the twelve major scales, and are familiar with at least some of the theory surrounding them. If you are not, I recommend studying the required music theory alongside this chapter. If you haven't done so already, I also strongly recommend working some scale studies into your practise routine. My book *100 Tips For Bass Guitar You Should Have Been Told* (Sanctuary Publishing) contains several chapters on how to learn your scales effectively.

You should be aware that while the scales and modes presented here are certainly popular choices for the style, you are by no means restricted to them. The information presented in this chapter is intended to serve merely as a starting point - an explanation of the most common harmonic devices that are often used when playing slap bass. Even from the earliest days of the technique, virtuoso players such as Stanley Clarke were using their thumbs to play advanced harmonic material in the jazz-fusion and rock genres. This is a tradition that has continued to the present day, with great players such as Marcus Miller and Victor Wooten (among many others) using their thumbs to play through fast bebop tunes and classical etudes, as well as the more obvious funk lines.

Before we get started, one last point: Slap bass is not the same as funk! Funk is a musical genre, one that can be played with the fingers, thumb, plectrum or any other playing method you desire. Jaco Pastorius played plenty of funk lines and never once used his thumb. Slap bass is a technique, and techniques are merely different ways of playing music. Lecture over, let's get started...

The Major Pentatonic Scale

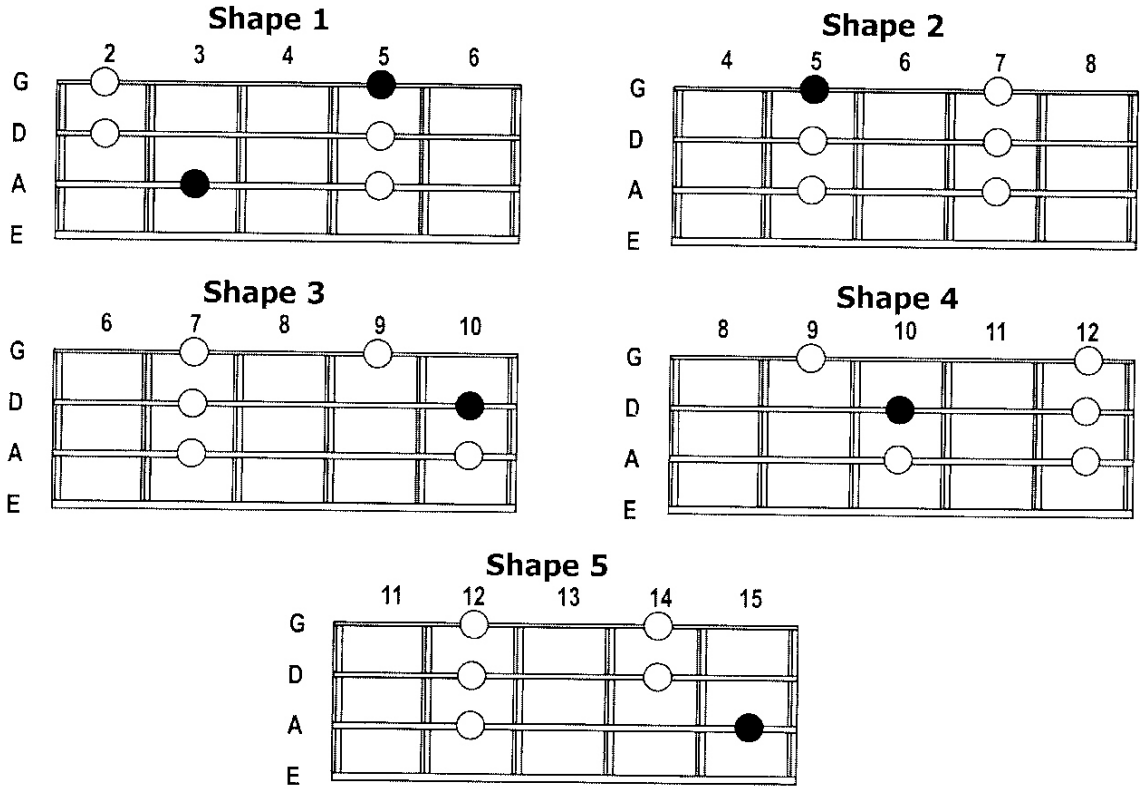
The major pentatonic scale, as its name suggests, is a five-note scale (the word 'penta' is from the Latin word for five) It is a derivation of the major scale, the difference between the two being that the pentatonic omits the fourth and seventh degrees of the major scale. In the scale of C major pentatonic for example, the notes F (the fourth), and B (the seventh) are omitted. This leaves us with a five-note scale consisting of C, D, E, G, A and the octave C:



The major pentatonic scale is frequently learnt and used in the form of a series of box shapes, each one starting on a different degree of the scale. On the next page are the five box shapes that the C pentatonic scale creates - the root notes (C) are coloured black.

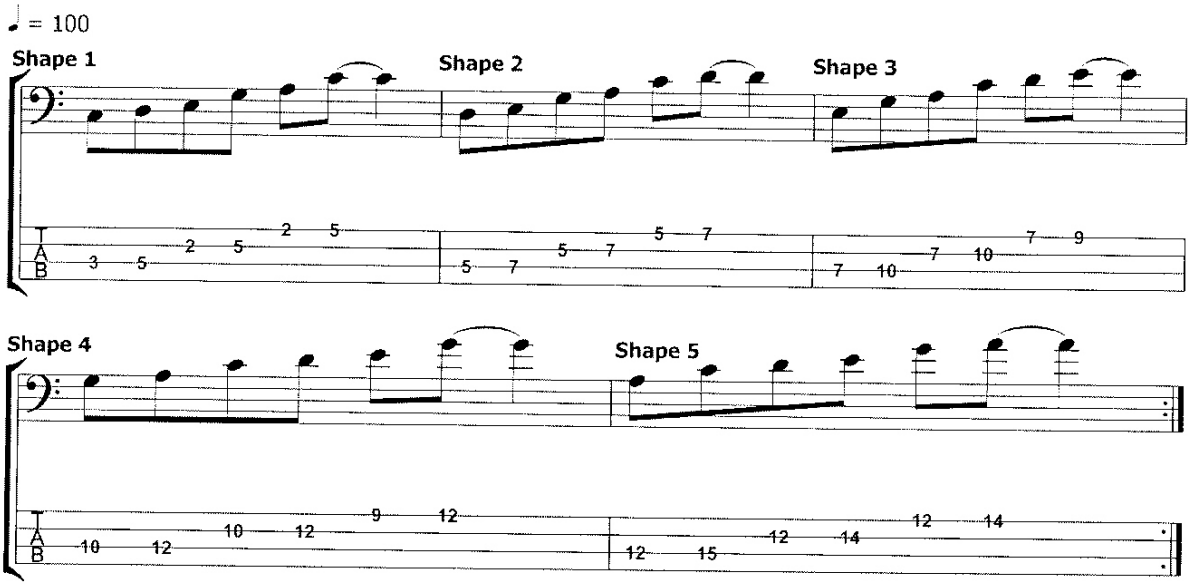
While I generally discourage the use of patterns and box shapes when learning scales, these are useful to a degree since they can help you to learn to use the scale all across the fingerboard.

Musicians cannot play what they don't know. **JEFF BERLIN**



Exercise 43

In this exercise we are simply going to play through each of the pentatonic box shapes shown above. Keep your ears open - the major pentatonic has a distinctive sound that may well be familiar to you from its frequent use in popular music.

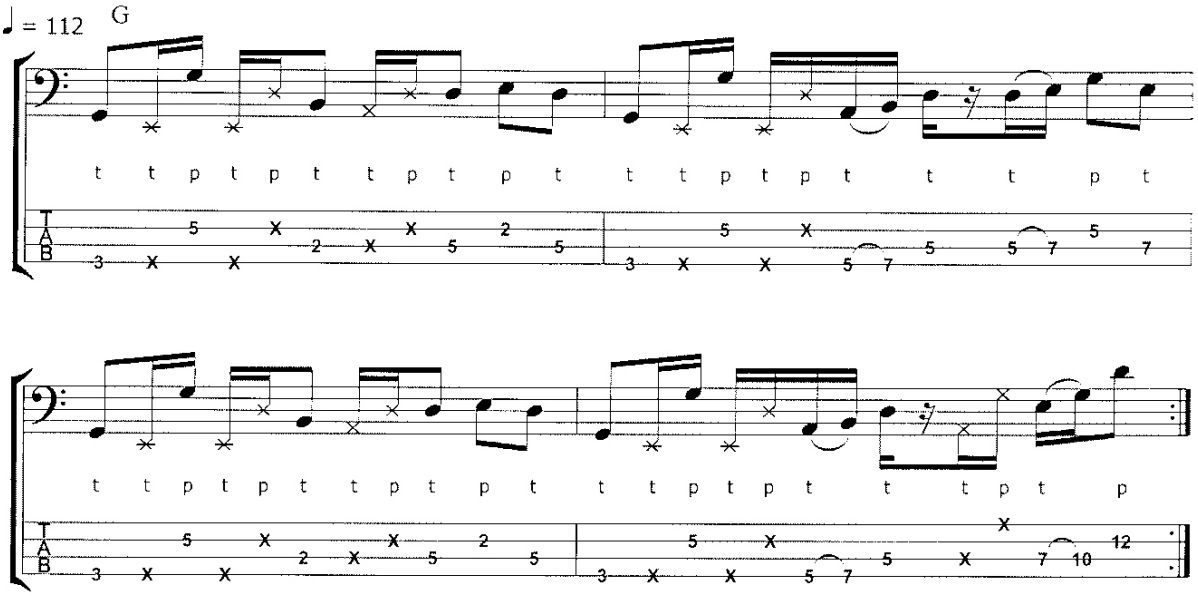


You should practise the pentatonic scale and its box shapes in all twelve keys. This will be infinitely easier if you already have a good understanding of major scales and keys. If not, I can only reiterate that you should study your scales in as much depth as you can. Scales are the building blocks of music, and the more you understand them, the quicker you will be able to evolve as a musician.

Exercise 44

CD 1: Track 42

Here is a slap line that uses the G major pentatonic scale and some of the box shapes derived from it. Bars 1 and 3 are based around box shape 1, bar 2 takes notes from box shape 2, and bar 4 uses notes from box shapes 2 and 5.



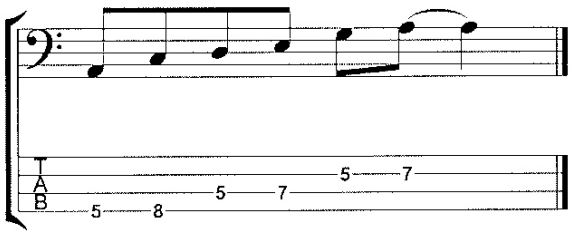
While the pentatonic scale is common in most musical styles, its relative simplicity and symmetry make it even more popular for slap bass parts.

Marcus Miller

Photo courtesy of Dave Marks

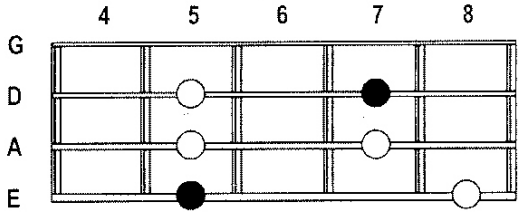
The Minor Pentatonic Scale

The minor scale also has a pentatonic scale derived from it. Again, two notes are omitted, this time the second and sixth degrees - in the case of A minor pentatonic, the missing notes are B and F. You'll notice that these are the same notes that were omitted from the C major pentatonic. This is because the keys of C major and A minor are related. This means that they contain the same notes. The A minor pentatonic scale contains the notes A C D E G and the octave A. Here is the A minor pentatonic scale in all its glory:

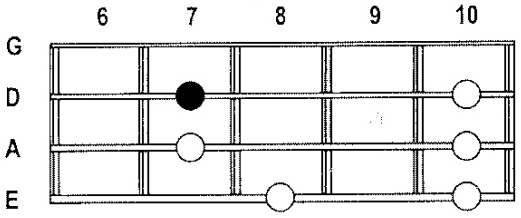


Again, a series of box shapes can be applied in order to assist with learning the scale. These are illustrated below.

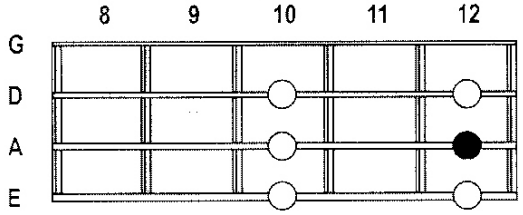
Shape 1



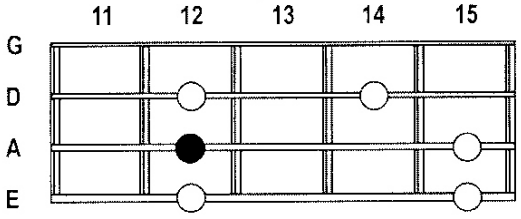
Shape 2



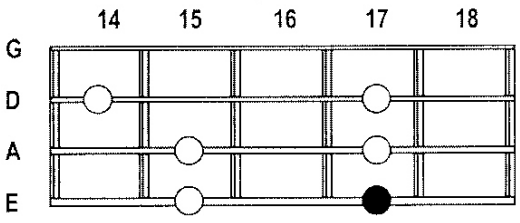
Shape 3



Shape 4



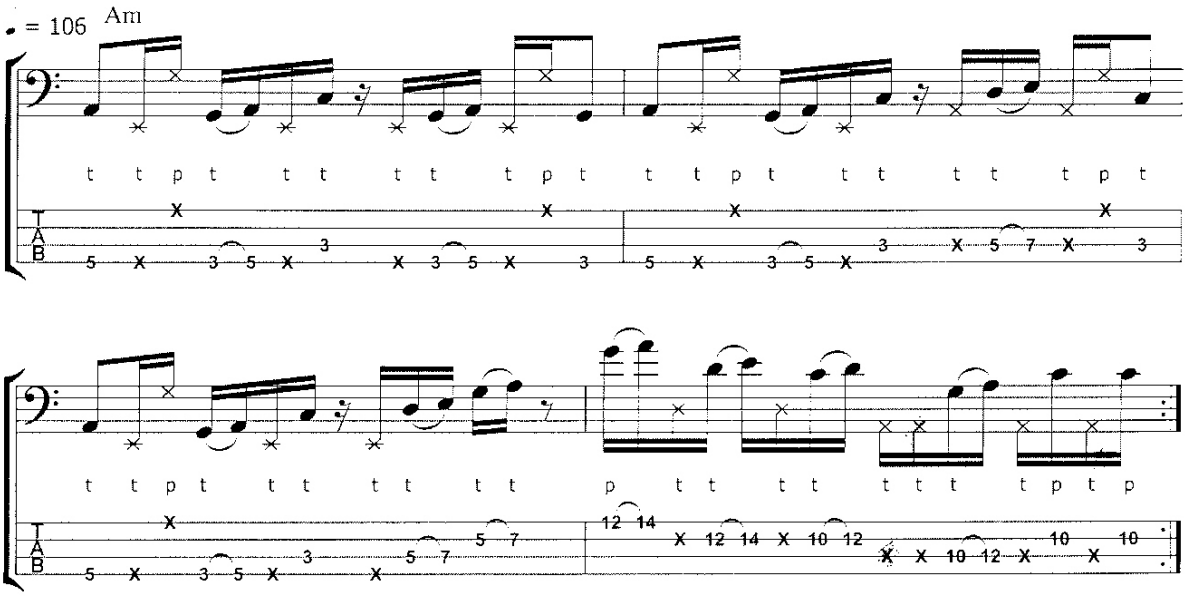
Shape 5



Exercise 45

CD 1: Track 43

Here is an exercise that uses the A minor pentatonic scale and its box shapes. The fill in bar 4 is reminiscent of the well-known slap fill from the disco classic 'Carwash'.



TIP! You'll probably notice that the box shapes from the A minor pentatonic are exactly the same as those from the C major pentatonic. This is because the two keys are related. This means that by learning the major pentatonic scales and their box shapes you will also be learning the minor ones. Each major key has a relative minor key, and you should learn which major scale is related to which minor scale. Understanding the fact that major and minor keys are related, and more importantly, understanding which is related to which can be a big help when studying scales. Here is a major/minor scale chart for you to refer to:

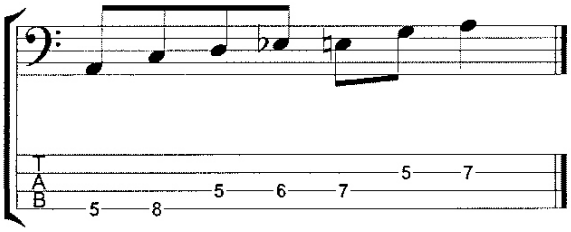
Major Key	Relative Minor Key
C	Am
G	Em
D	Bm
A	F♯m
E	C♯m
B	G♯m
F♯	D♯m
D♭	B♭m
A♭	Fm
E♭	Cm
B♭	Gm
F	Dm

From a general music point of view it's important that you listen to as much as you can, don't just restrict yourself to one style of music. Listen, listen and then listen to everything! It's particularly important for bass players because they have more than just that one role to play.

JOHN PAUL JONES (LED ZEPPELIN)

The Blues Scale

Another scale frequently used in slap and pop is the blues scale. The blues scale is almost identical to the minor pentatonic scale, the difference being that it contains one extra note. The extra note is a flattened fifth, and it is this note that lends the scale its 'bluesy' qualities. Because of this, it is unsurprisingly referred to as the 'blue note.' Here is the A minor blues scale:

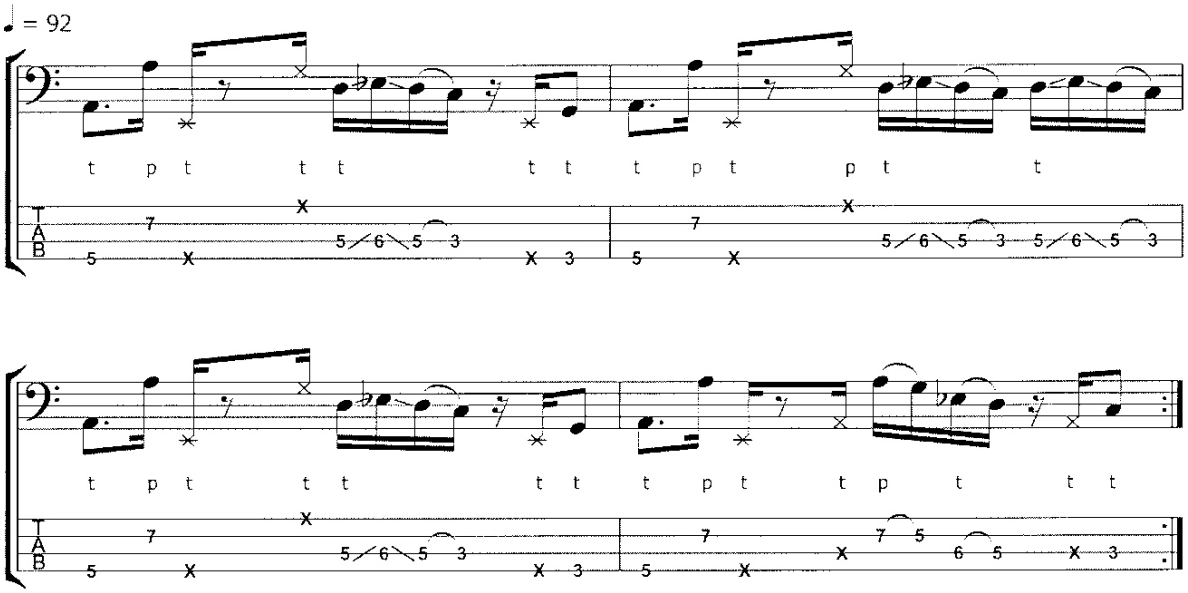


You should add the blue note into the box shapes you have learnt for the minor pentatonic scale.

Exercise 46

CD 1: Track 44

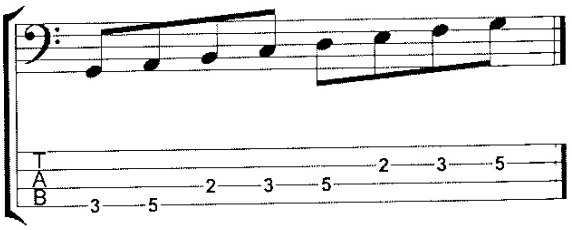
Here is an exercise that makes very obvious use of the A blues scale. The figure on beat 3 of the first bar (which recurs throughout) is played with only one thumb stroke - the D is slapped, but the following E♭ and D are played with glissando's (slides) and the final C is played as a pull-off. The whole figure needs to be played very legato, so listen closely to the CD to hear how it should sound.



The Mixolydian Mode

The next scale for us to look at is the Mixolydian mode. If you are unfamiliar with modes, allow me to explain: if you played through a C major scale starting on G and ending on G, but using all the notes contained in the key of C, (i.e. all naturals) you would be playing a *mode* of the C major scale. In fact you would be playing the G Mixolydian mode. Each mode represents a diatonic chord within the key. The G Mixolydian mode represents the chord of G^7, which is chord V in the key of C. Therefore, when you see a chord of G^7, you would use the G Mixolydian mode when creating a bassline, or improvising a solo.

Here is the G Mixolydian mode:



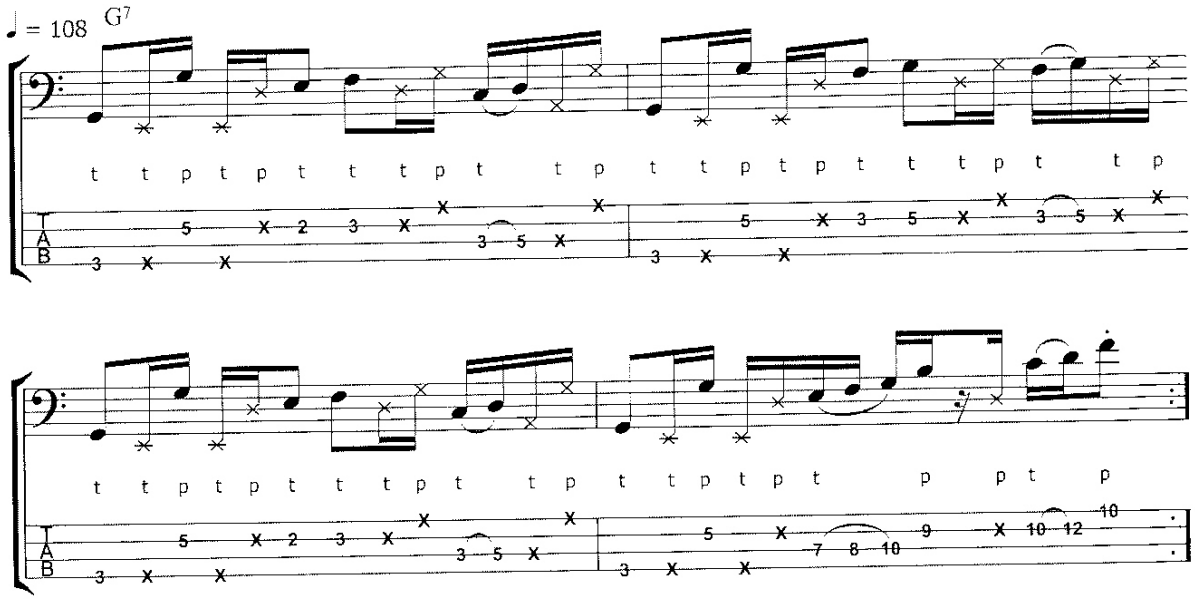
You should practise the Mixolydian mode over two octaves as well. Remember to do this in all twelve keys to get the most out of it.

TIP! Learning the modes doesn't have to be hard. Providing you have a good working knowledge of the major scales you can save yourself a lot of work by thinking of modes in a different way. The way to do this is to relate them back to the major scale. The Mixolydian mode for example is almost identical to the major scale, but with a flattened seventh - while a G major scale will contain an F♯ as the seventh note, to make it a Mixolydian mode you simply flatten the seventh, making it an F.

Exercise 47

CD 1: Track 45

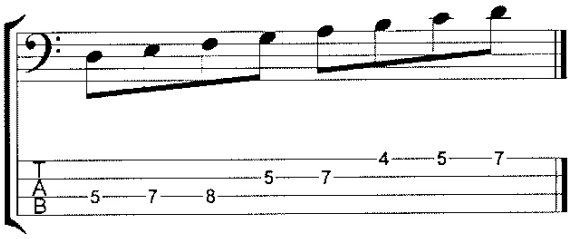
Here's a funk groove over a G^7 chord. The G Mixolydian mode (G, A, B, C, D, E, F, G) has been used to create the bassline throughout.



The Mixolydian mode covers one of the most important chords in popular music - the dominant seventh. The sound of this mode should have started to become familiar to you by now, and if you have followed the information presented in this chapter closely, you should be able to hear it in your basslines, and know how to begin applying it.

The Dorian Mode

The Dorian mode is the second and final mode that we will look at in this book. It is based on the second degree of the scale, so in the case of the key of C major, the Dorian mode starts on D and contains the notes D, E, F, G, A, B, C and D (again, all naturals). The chord we derive from this mode is the minor seven chord - Dm^7 in this case. Along with the dominant seventh chord, this is one of the most commonly used chords in western music. Here is the D Dorian mode:



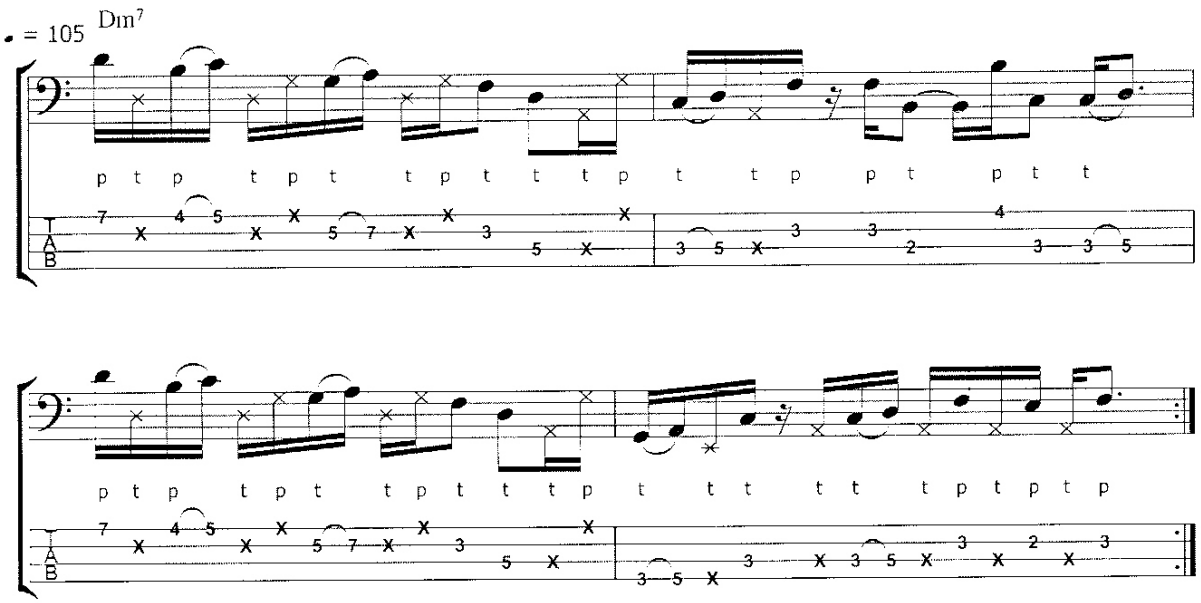
Again, the Dorian mode should be practised over two octaves, and in all twelve keys.

TIP! As I suggested with the Mixolydian mode, an easier way to remember the Dorian mode may be to refer it back to the major scale. If you think of the Dorian mode as a major scale with a flattened seventh (same as the Mixolydian) and a flattened third it may make the information easier to digest. Note that both the Mixolydian and Dorian feature that flattened seventh.

Exercise 48

CD 1: Track 46

This exercise uses the D Dorian (D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D) mode and features a lot of ghost notes.

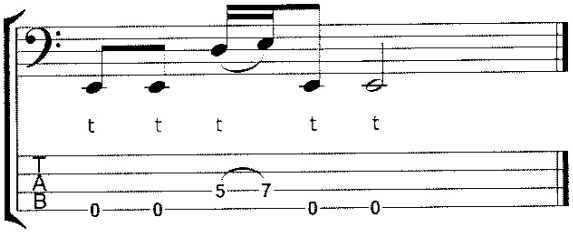


'Funk' Figures

As you learn the slap style and study the various players associated with it, you will notice several common note choices cropping up. While all of these note choices have been covered by the various scales and modes we have looked at in this chapter, there are certain ones that are worthy of a special mention. All of the following 'funk figures' are based around a key centre of E, the bassist's favourite!

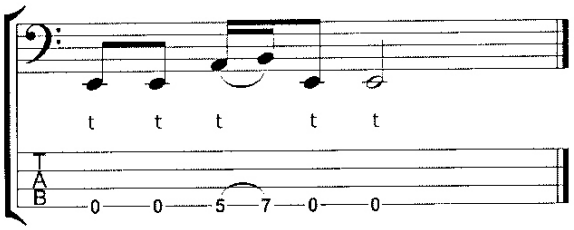
Example 1

Our first example is the flattened seventh to the root note, in this case D to E. This is very common, not just in funk, but in all styles.



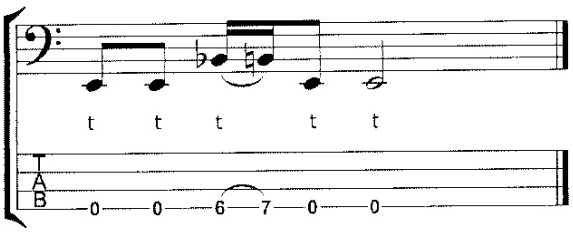
Example 2

The second example is the fourth to the fifth, in this case A to B. Again, very common, and not just in funk music.



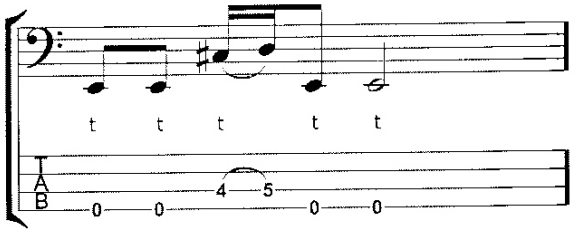
Example 3

This example is the flattened fifth, or 'blue note' to the fifth, in this case B♭ to B.



Example 4

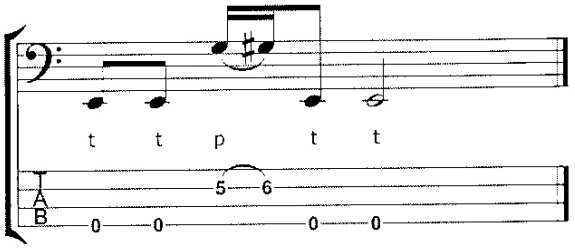
This example is the sixth to flattened seventh. The sixth and seventh can either be played above or below the root - here they are used below the root.



Example 5

This final example is classic funk: the minor third to the major third. This one only works over a major chord. Minor thirds can often be played over a major chord backing, and indeed they frequently are in funk music. They are often referred to as 'ambiguous thirds'.

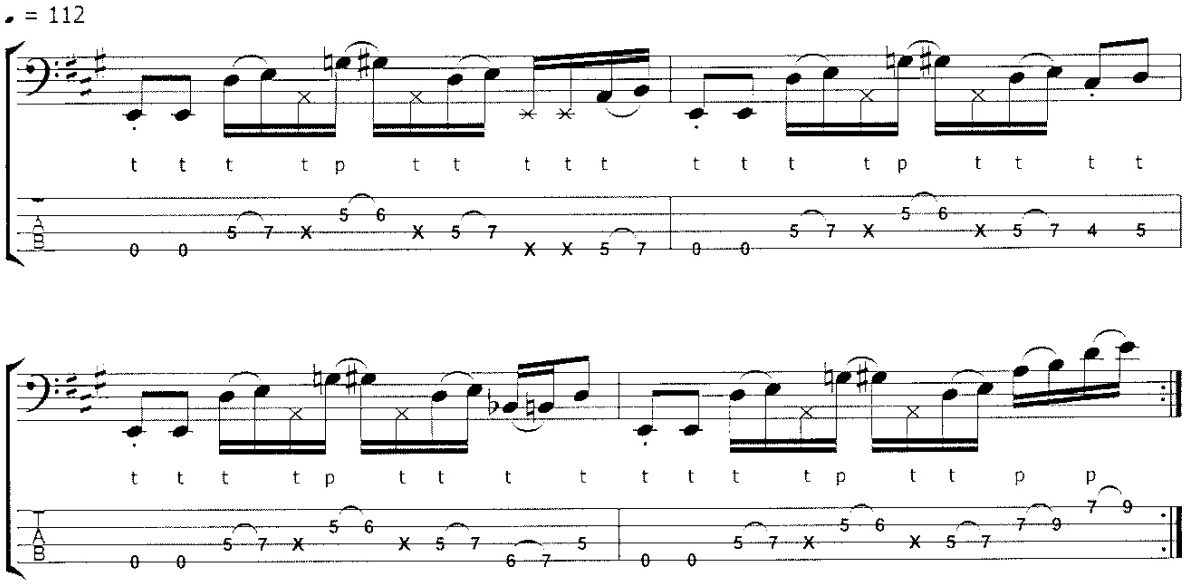
Note that you cannot play the opposite - a major third over a minor chord.



Exercise 49

CD 1: Track 47

This exercise makes use of all of the above funk note combinations.



I recommend transposing this exercise into as many other keys as possible so that you can find out what the funk notes are in other keys. You should also look back over all the basslines we have covered in this book so far, and see which note combinations you can spot. I can assure you there are plenty!

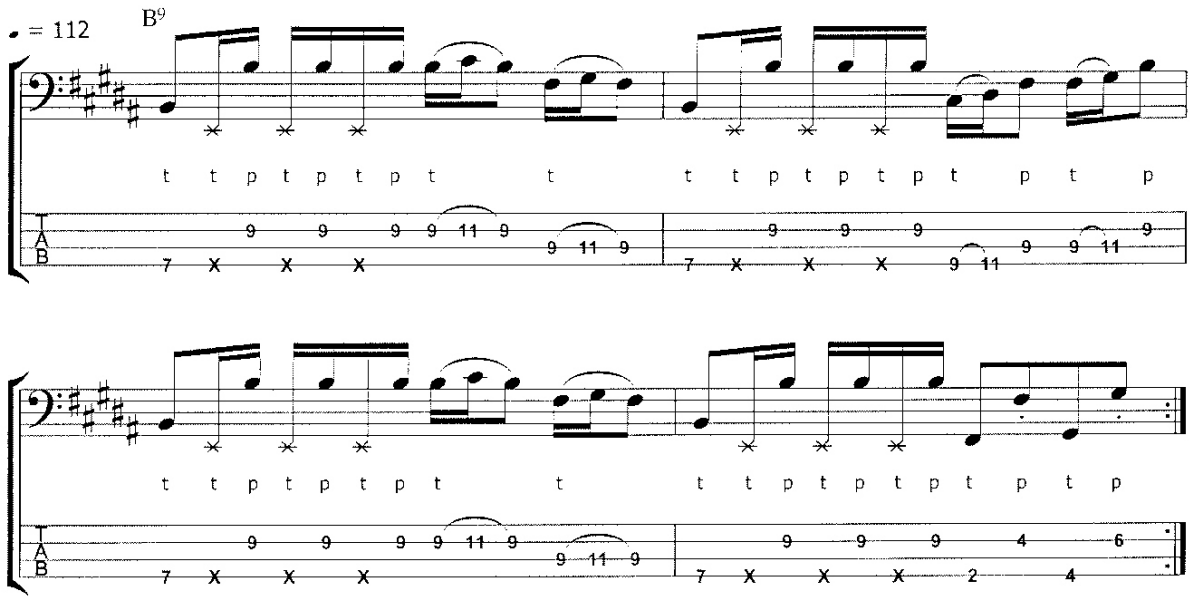
Chapter Summary

In this chapter we have looked at many of the scales that are commonly used when using the slap and pop technique, although as I said at the beginning of the chapter, technique should never dictate which notes you choose. However, the scales that we have covered here are nevertheless very common choices for slap and pop grooves and are therefore worthy of our attention. In the following exercise area there are a selection of lines that make use of many of the scales and modes presented in this chapter. As well as learning to play each exercise, you should study the note choices used in them. Remember the ones you like and try to incorporate those ideas into your own lines.

Exercise 50

CD 1: Track 48

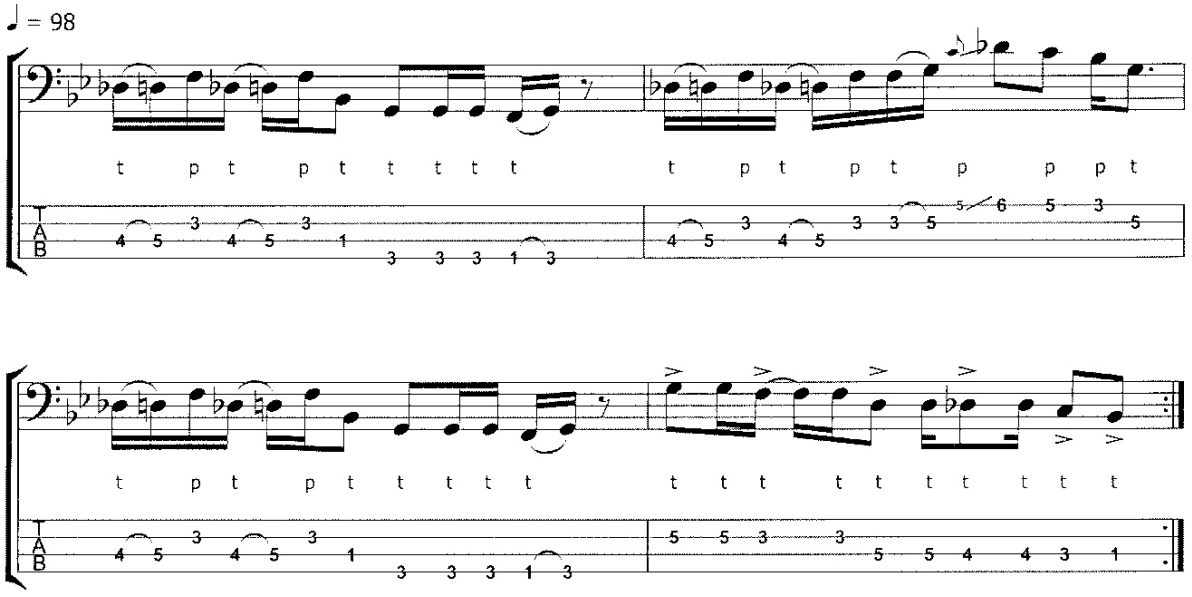
This exercise uses the B major pentatonic scale (B, C♯, D♯, F♯, G♯, B) and features plenty of hammer-ons, pull-offs and ghost notes. It also has quite a fast tempo, so be sure to practise it without a metronome first in order to get the notes under your fingers, and then with the metronome or the CD.



Exercise 51

CD 1: Track 49

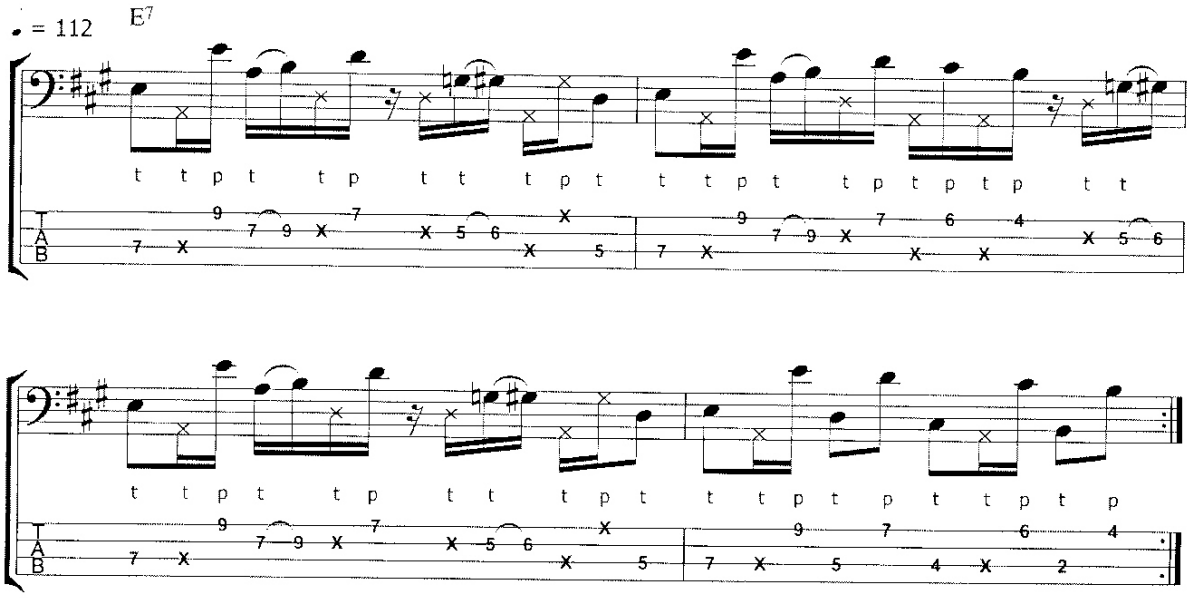
This exercise is in G minor and uses the G blues scale (G, B♭, C, D♭, D, F, G. Note that each of the first three bars begin with the blue note D♭, as a hammer-on to the D, the fifth of the implied Gm7 chord.



Exercise 52

CD 1: Track 50

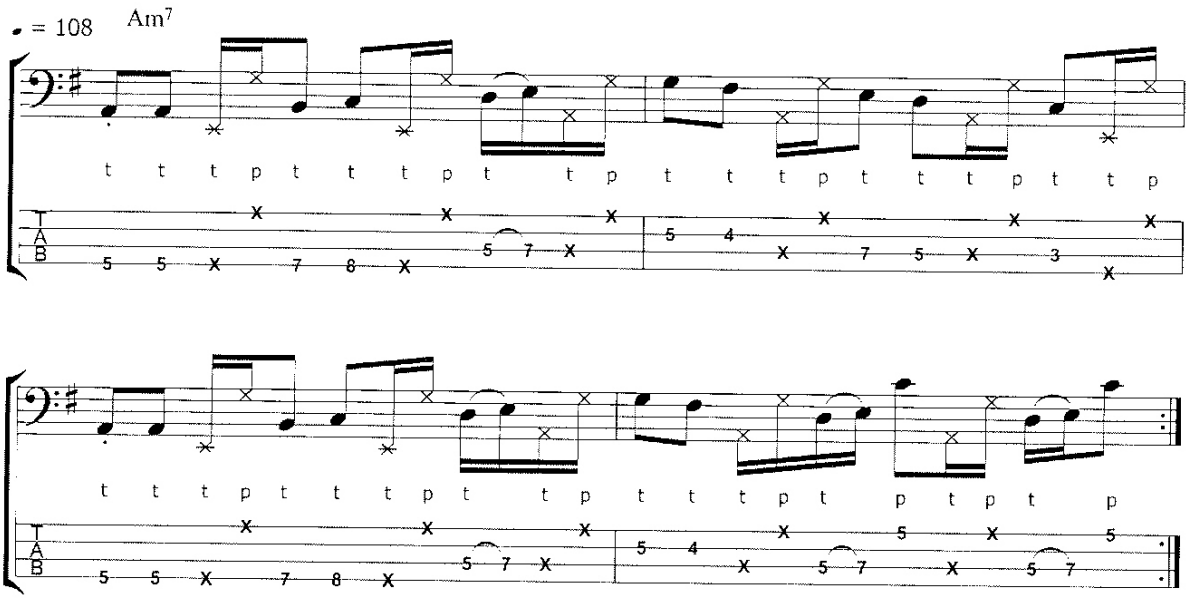
Here is another exercise that utilises the Mixolydian mode. This time we are playing over an E^7 chord so we are using the E Mixolydian mode (E, F♯, G♯, A, B, C♯, D, E).



Exercise 53

CD 1: Track 51

This exercise is a slap line over an Am^7 so chord so we are using the A Dorian mode (A, B, C, D, E, F♯, G, A).



Section 1

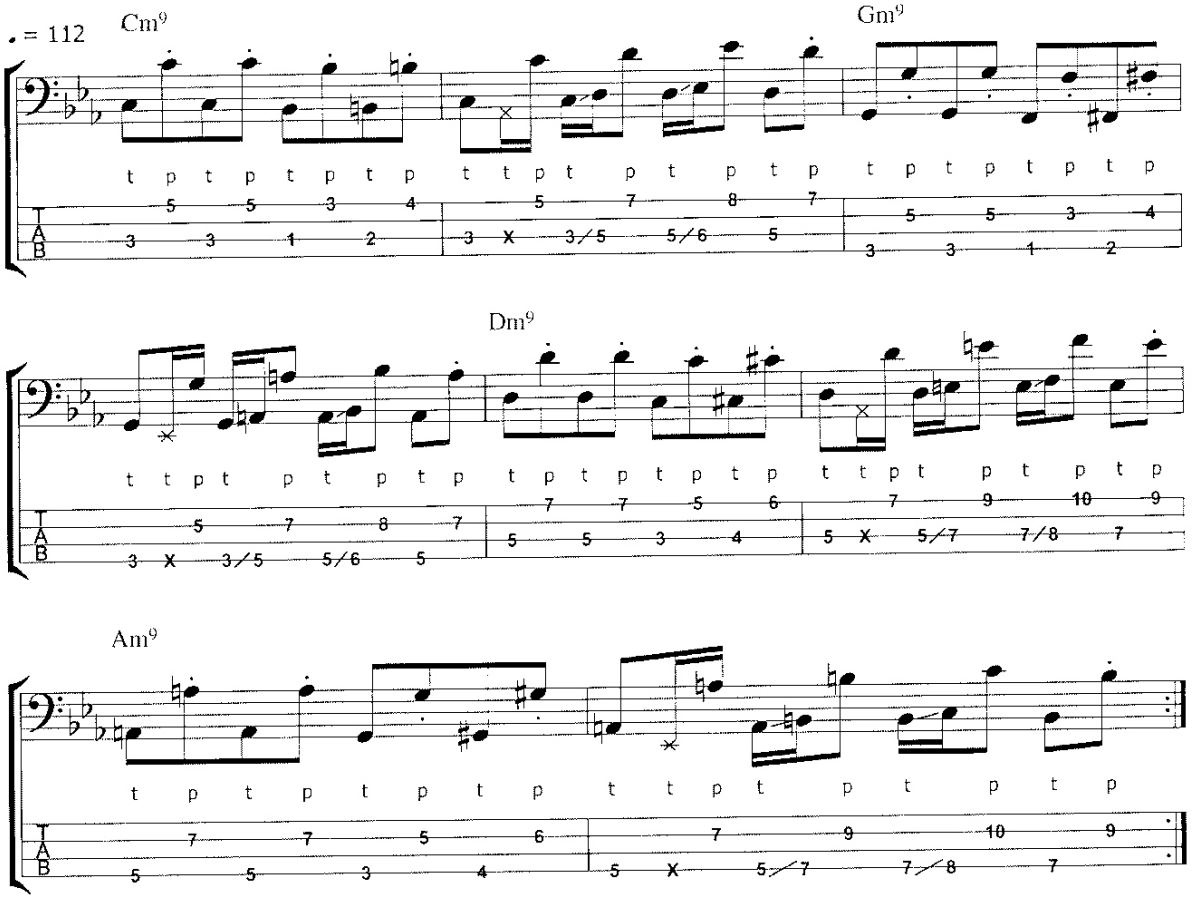
Beginner Level Exercise Area

By this point you should have completed and digested all the exercises and information contained in the first five chapters. This section contains ten new exercises that will challenge you further. These lines all feature devices that we have looked at in the Beginner Level of the book, from basic slapping and popping, to hammer-ons and ghost notes. Some of them are considerably more complicated than the exercises in previous chapters and you should take your time with them. Be sure to get these basslines firmly under your belt before moving onto the next section.

Exercise 54

CD 1: Track 52

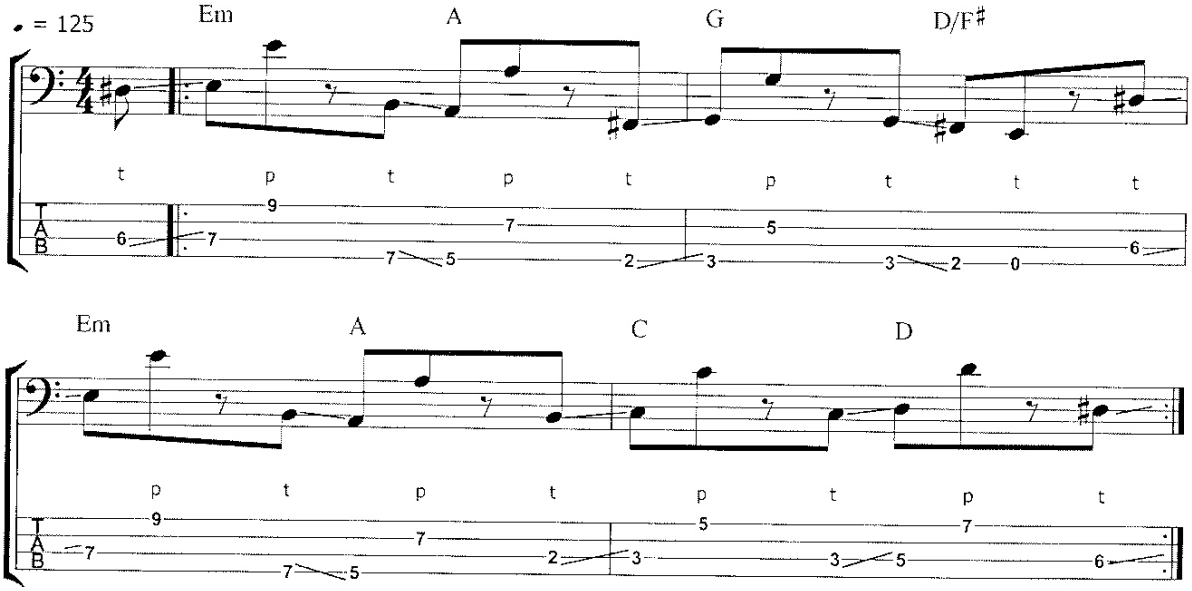
This exercise is a slap and pop line that has a disco/funk feel to it. The basic line is a two bar figure which is transposed for each chord. Note the ascending line in the first bar of the phrase: the seventh of the chord falls on a strong beat (beat 3) and is followed by a chromatic passing note that leads back to the root. In the second bar of the phrase, there is another ascending line that follows scale tones: root, second, minor third. Note the sixteenth note rhythms that are used in the second bar of the phrase. These break up the monotony of the line and add rhythmic excitement.



Exercise 55

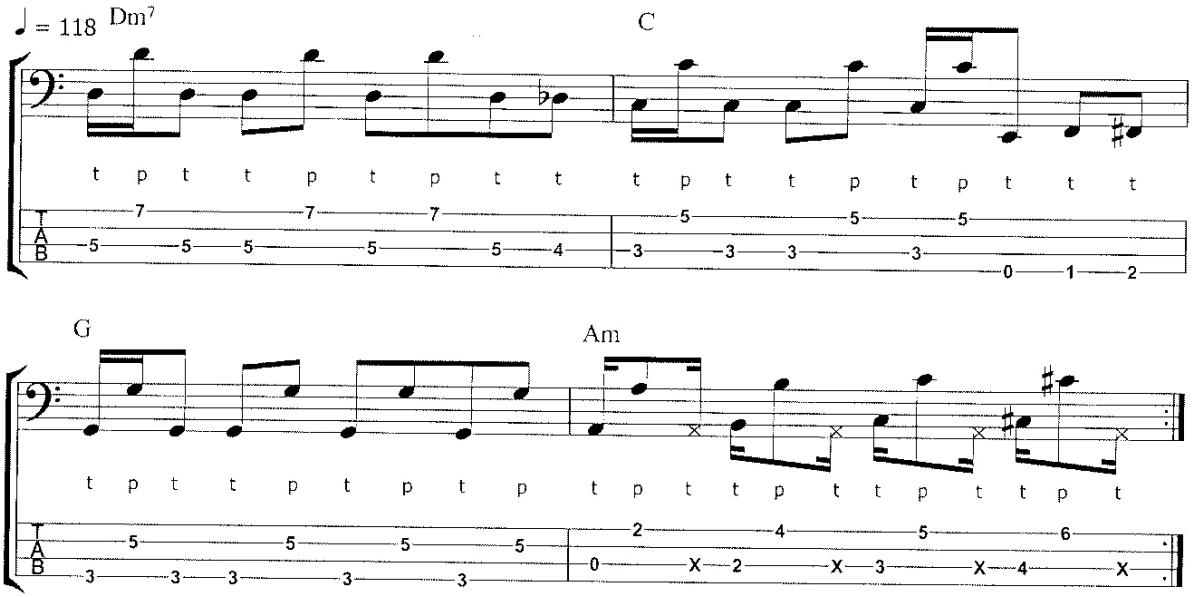
CD 1: Track 53

This exercise makes use of glissandos, or slides. This lends the line a slippery feel. Be careful with this one - it may not look particularly challenging, but the tempo is quite fast, and you have to move around the neck quite a lot.



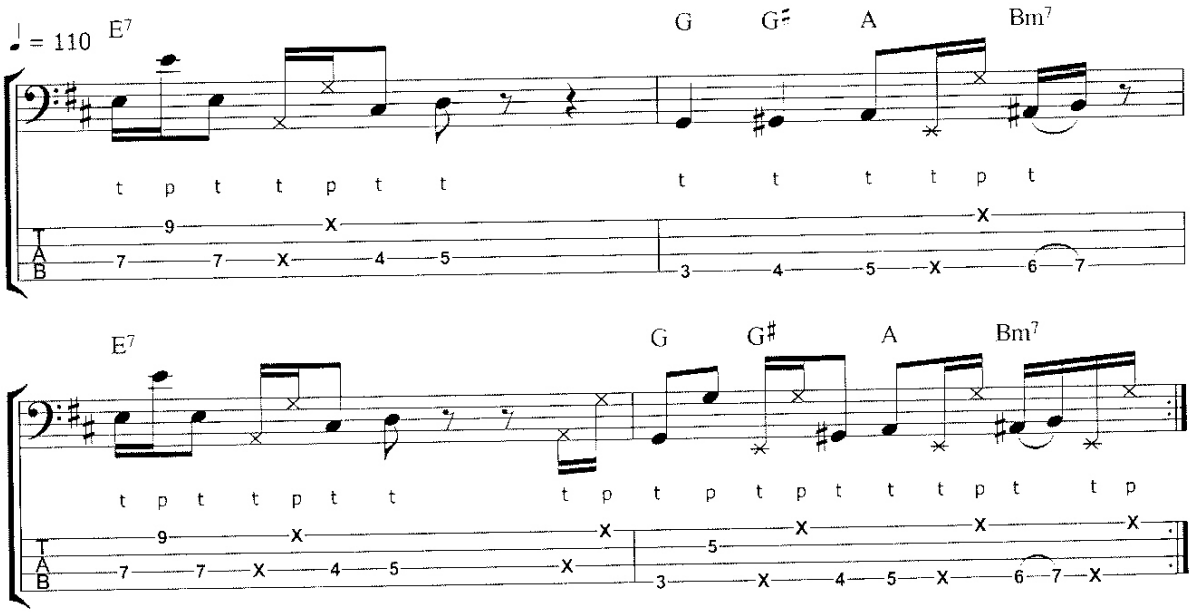
Exercise 56

This exercise has a real bounce to it and is a good one to experiment with staccato playing. Try playing the exercise with the popped notes kept short, then play it again and allow them to ring for their full length - you should hear that just this simple playing inflection can have a big impact on the sound and feel of the line.



Exercise 57

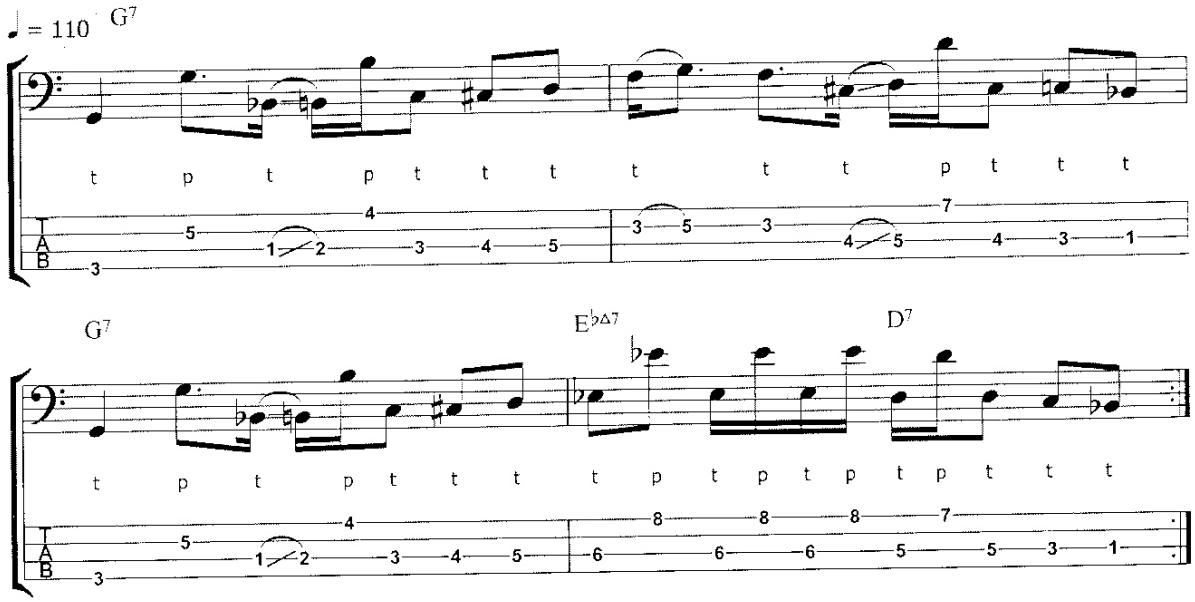
This is a classic funk line that uses most of the techniques that we have looked at in the first section of the book. Note the use of space in the first and third bars; this is crucial to the groove. There are a lot of ghost notes in the fourth bar so keep a close eye on the slap guides.



Exercise 58

CD 1: Track 54

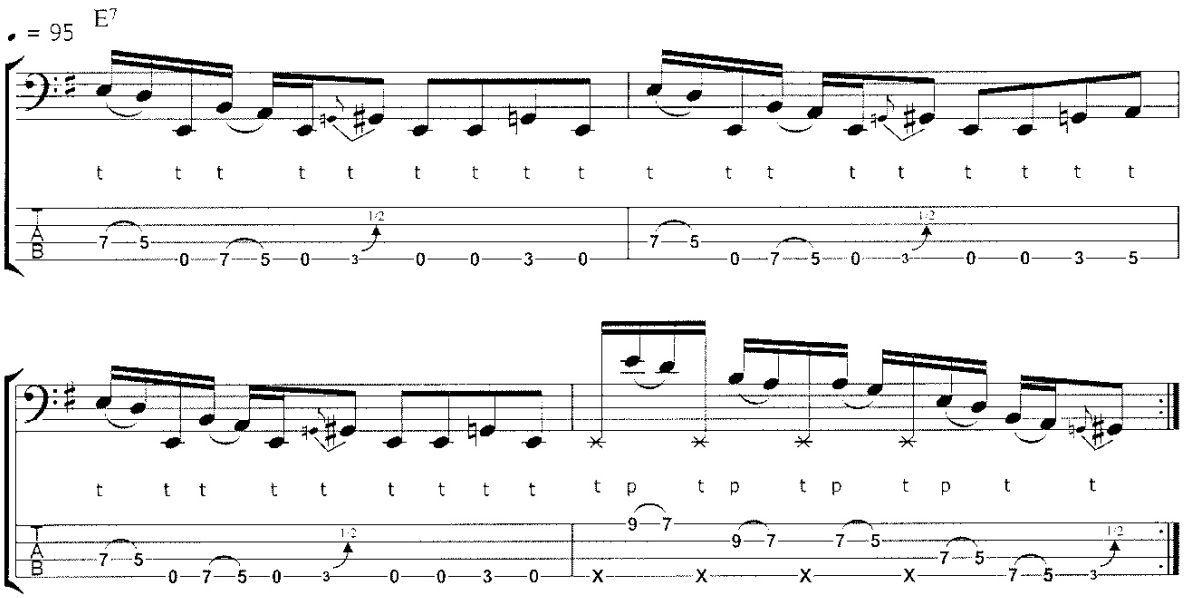
This line is quite busy and has a very strong groove to it. Watch out for the glissando figure in the first and third bars: after the popped B, you need to play a lower C. I recommend using your first finger to slide from the Bb to the B, your fourth finger for the popped B, then the second finger for the C. The C♯ and D are chromatic from the C so they can be played with the third and fourth fingers respectively.



Exercise 59

CD 1: Track 55

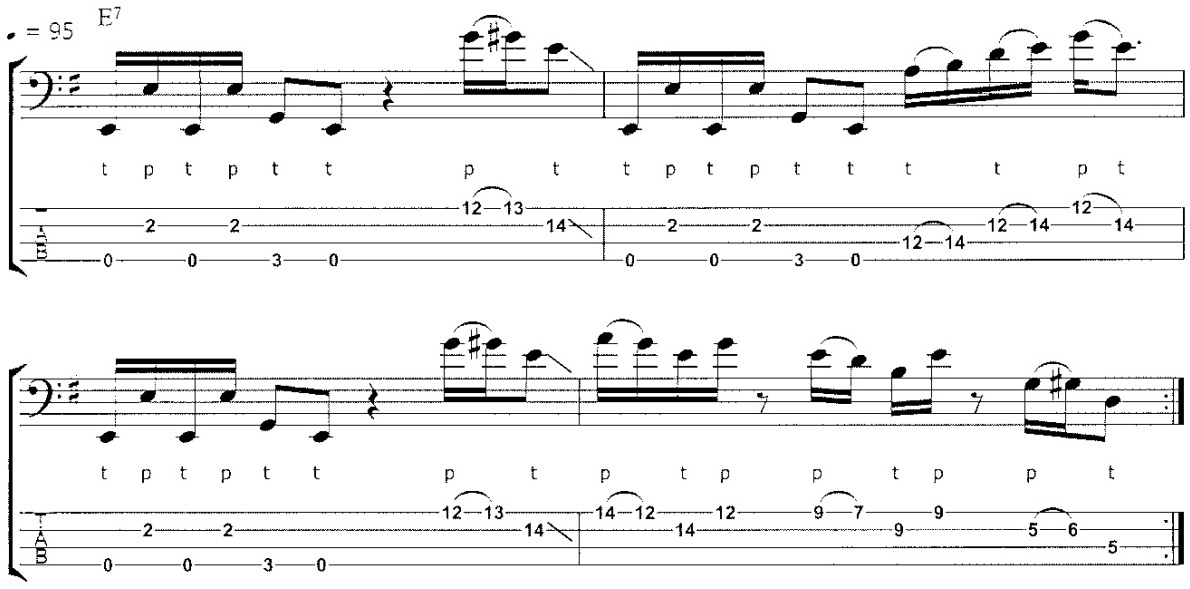
This exercise may look a bit frantic, but don't worry - the tempo is quite slow and there are a lot of pull-offs which makes things easier. Make sure you follow the slap guides carefully to be sure you aren't slapping notes you don't need to be.



Exercise 60

CD 1: Track 56

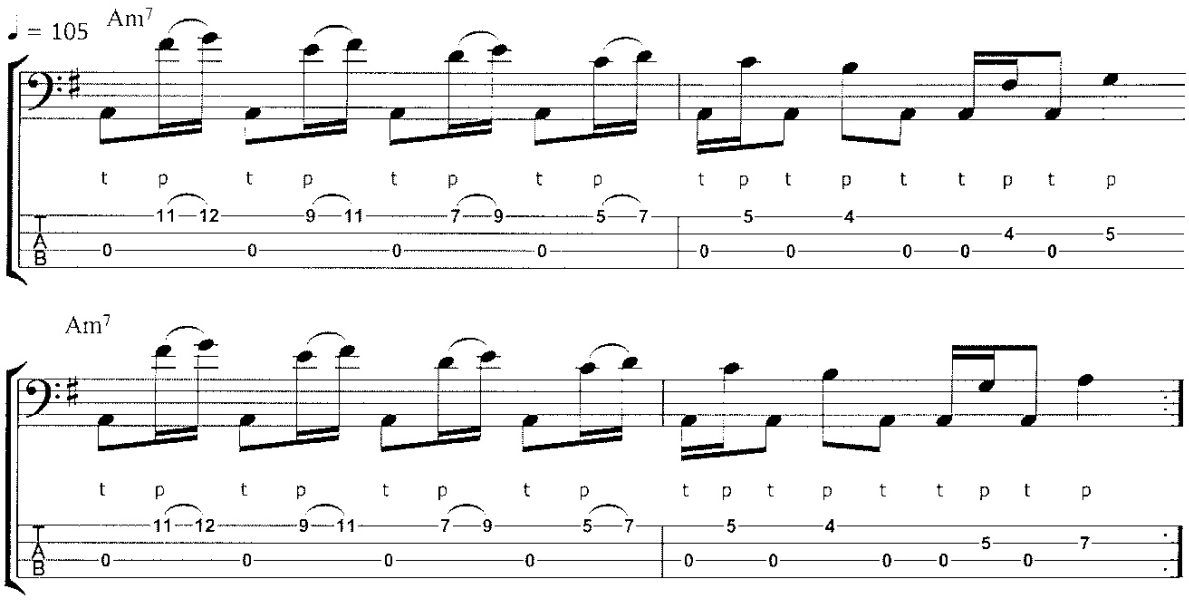
This exercise may also look rather complex, but you'll notice that there is a lot of repetition. The figure in the first two beats of the first three bars is the same, only the fills are different. These fills are all based on the popular funk figures that we discussed in Chapter 5.



Exercise 61

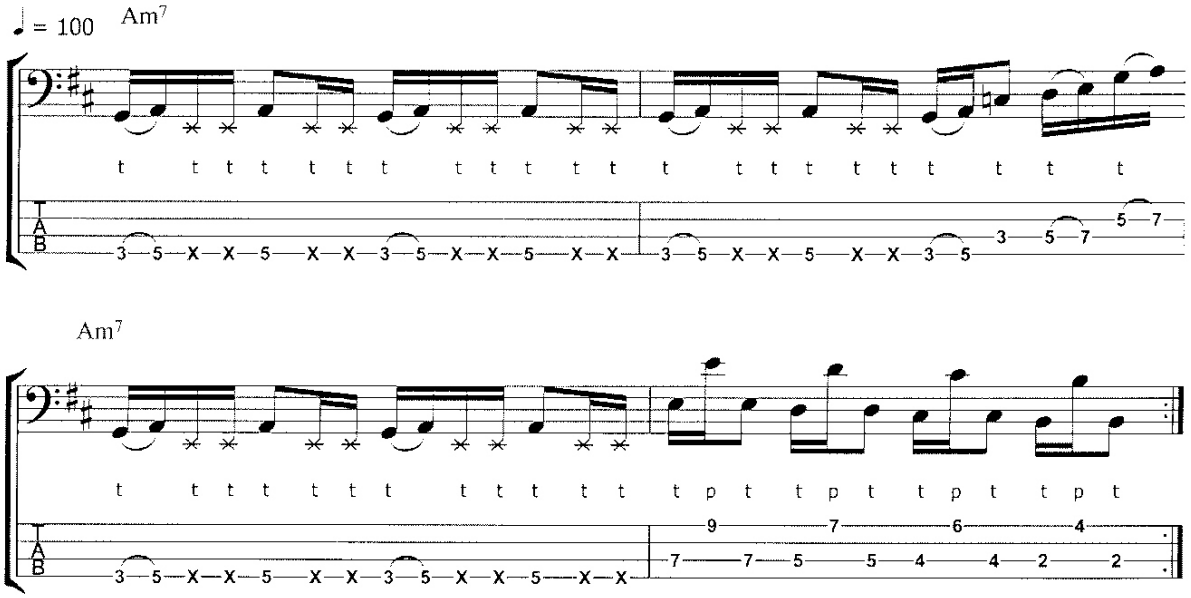
CD 1: Track 57

This exercise is played over an Am7 chord, and as such makes use of the Dorian mode. Notice how the open A string is allowed to ring beneath the hammer-ons throughout the exercise.



Exercise 62

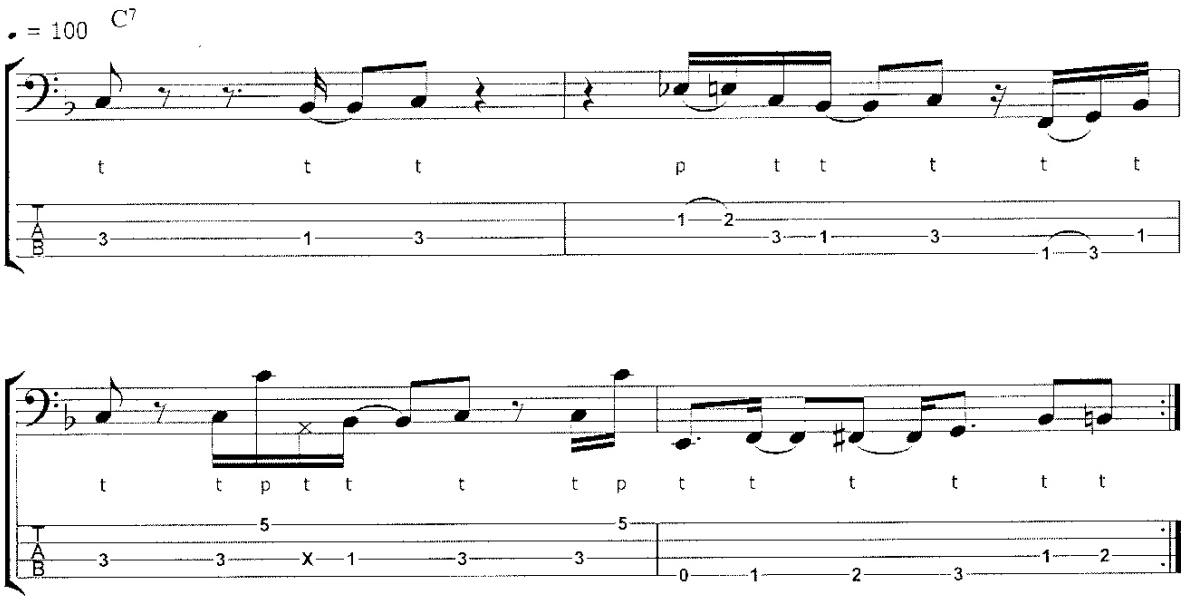
This exercise features a lot of sixteenth notes. Many of these are ghost notes, which are used to fill in the gaps and add rhythmic impetus to the line - this gives it a powerful, driving feel. The last bar is a classic descending octave figure that is rhythmically a contrast to the rest of the line.

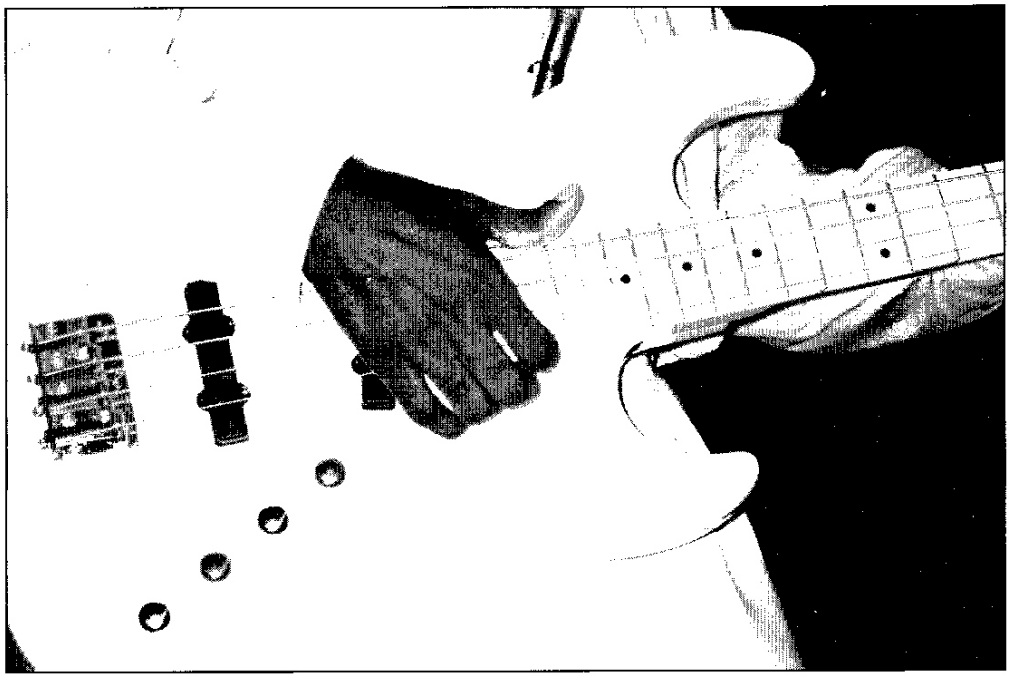


Exercise 63

CD 1: Track 58

This is another groove that features a lot of space. Be careful with your timing on this one, it needs to be accurate. The B♭ that falls on the last semiquaver of beat 2 is crucial to the feel, and if played late or early will not have the same effect. Note the absence of a note on beat one of the second bar - this unpredictability makes the line more interesting. Also look out for the syncopations in the last bar - this is a classic turnaround figure.





Larry Graham *Photo courtesy of Greg Jamate*

Section 2

Intermediate Level

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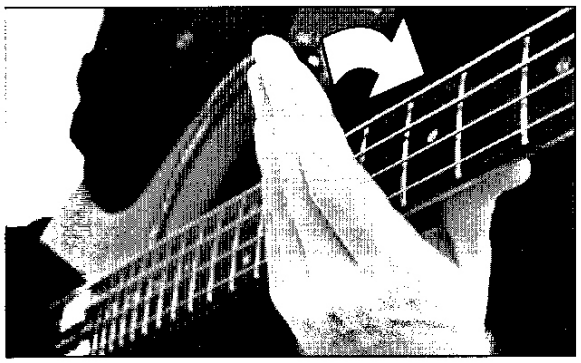
Chapter 6

Left Hand Slaps and Sixteenth Note Lines

Using all of the aspects of slap and pop that we have examined so far you should now be able to play a wide range of bass parts. There is however one further basic element we can add to the mix than can make things even more interesting - the left hand slap. Incorporating the left hand is not strictly necessary, as you'll have noticed from the exercises we have studied so far that don't use it. However, it can make things a lot more interesting rhythmically, and allow you to play continuous sixteenth note grooves that would be impossible with just the techniques covered in the first section of the book. One of the first notable players to incorporate left hand slaps into his playing was Mark King (See Section 4: Famous Slap Bassists). Originally a drummer, King applied his rhythmic mind to the bass, resulting in the sixteenth note slap grooves that underpinned much of music that he created with pop/funk outfit Level 42. Of course, many other bassists have since employed this technique in their playing.



A left hand slap is performed in much the same way as you would use your left hand to mute or shorten an open string - we looked at this technique back in Chapter 1. The difference is that a left hand slap needs to be audible and therefore needs to be performed with a little more force. Try slapping your open E string, then slapping your left hand against the strings. You should be getting a ghost note just from your left hand. You can see the motion and hand position required in the photograph.

TIP! For some great examples of sixteenth note lines that feature left hand slaps I recommend checking out the following tracks:

1. 'Love Games' - Level 42 (Mark King)
2. 'Almost There' - Level 42 (Mark King)
3. 'Sexually Active' - Stuart Hamm
4. 'Illegal' - Stanley Clarke
5. 'Lords Of The Low Frequencies' - Stanley Clarke
6. 'Victor's Jam' - Victor Wooten
7. 'You Can't Hold No Groove' - Victor Wooten
8. 'Tommy The Cat' - Primus (Les Claypool)
9. 'Fritter Boy' - Adam Nitti
10. 'Jack Cannon' - Alain Caron

Time is everything, so whenever you play, tap your foot! This will also help develop limb independence. Try playing long rhythmic patterns, rather like loops, and just keep them going (keep that foot tapping!), and play in different tempos - it is often harder to make music 'swing' at a slow tempo.'

MARK KING (LEVEL 42)

The key is to try and hold the groove down, particularly if you're in a big band. That's what a bass player does. The way to learn to play funky is to listen to a funky drummer; they have a lot to do with it too.

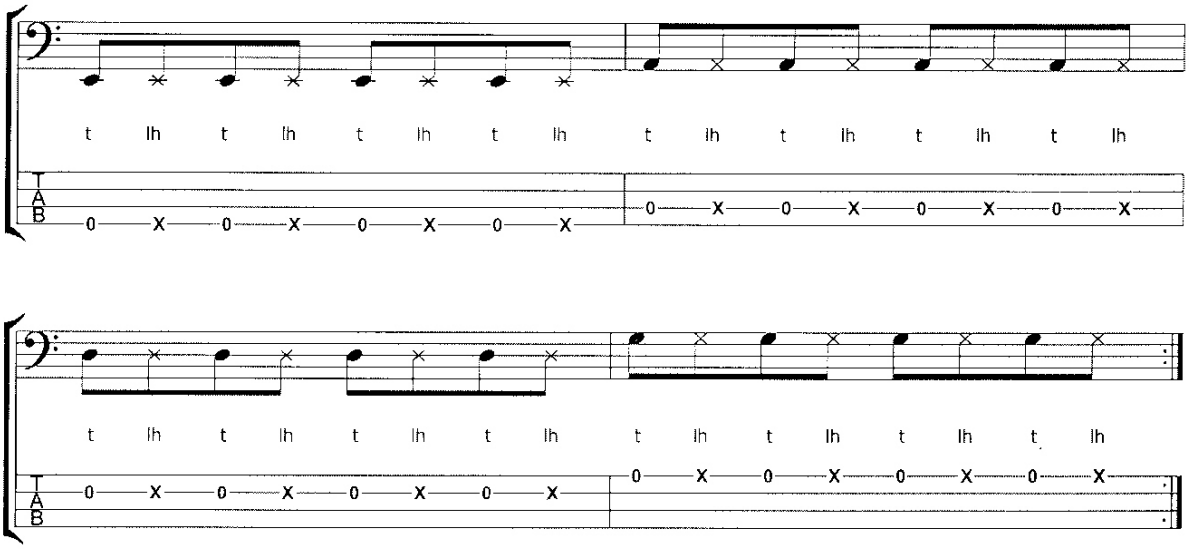
VERDINE WHITE (EARTH, WIND & FIRE)

Exercise 64

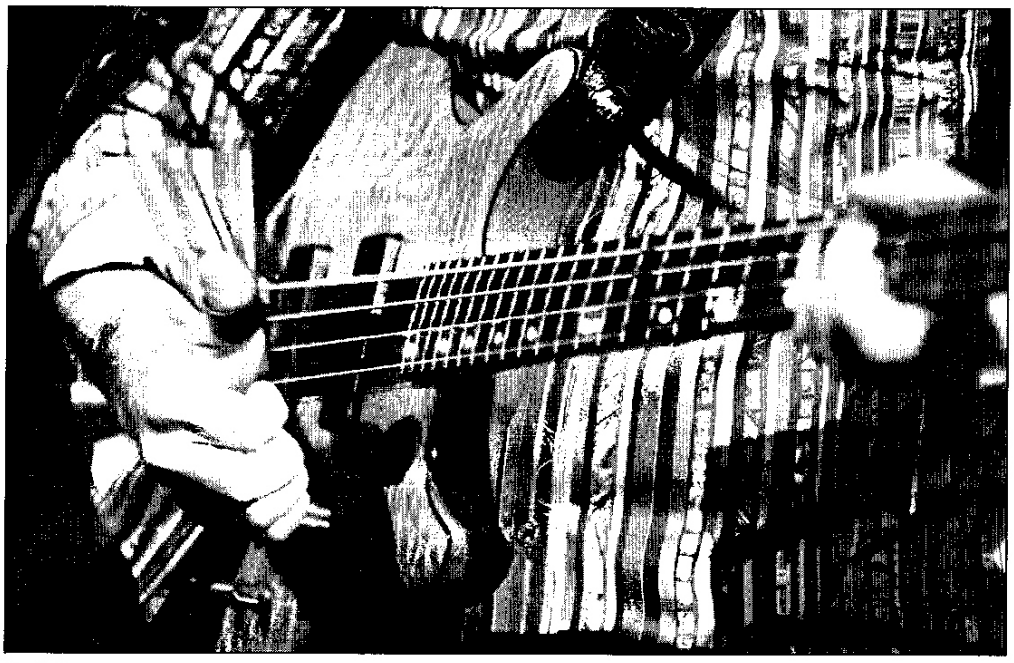
CD 1: Track 59

Let's try a simple left hand slap exercise. We will slap each open string in turn, and follow each right hand slap with a left hand slap. Remember that the left hand slap should produce a pitchless note. While ghost notes are usually written on the string that they occur on, with left hand slaps you will hitting most of the strings at once so you don't need to worry too much about where they are written on the stave.

♩ = 100



You should not move on any further until you have mastered this first exercise and accurately captured the sound of the left hand slap.



Mark King

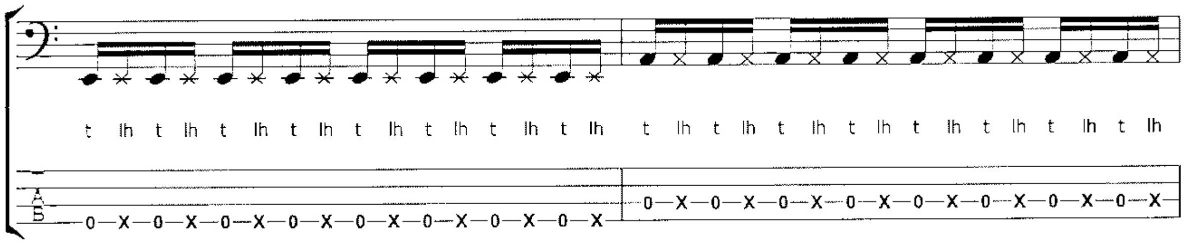
Photo courtesy of Harry Durrant

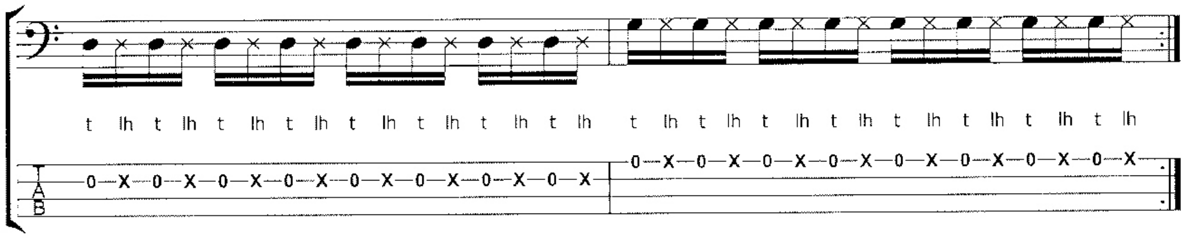
Exercise 65

CD 1: Track 60

Using the left hand we are able to fill in many of the gaps in our slap lines. You won't always want to do this, but it can make for a very rhythmically interesting bassline. In this next exercise we are going to slap eighth notes on each string, but fill in the gaps with left hand slaps, creating a sixteenth note line.

♩ = 100





Hopefully you will find that with little effort you have been able to take an eighth note line and turn it into a sixteenth note line with a strong rhythmic pulse.

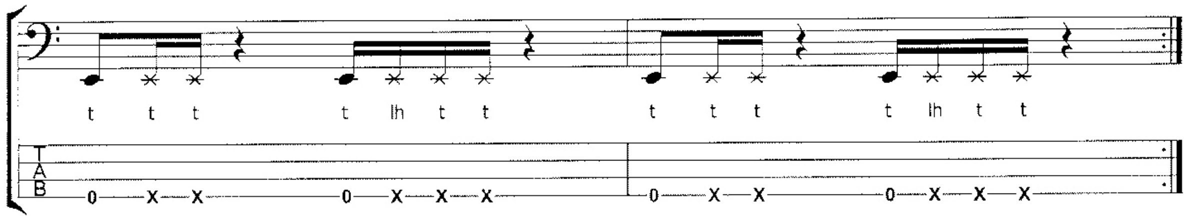
TIP! If you find you are not getting the sound you hear on the CD, you may need to examine your technique and modify it. The fingers of the left hand should be flat as they come into contact with the strings, and the motion needs to come from the first knuckle (nearest your palm). As with muting with your left hand, try to avoid playing any harmonics such as those over the fifth and seventh frets. If you hand is positioned so that your fourth finger is roughly over the sixth fret you should be able to avoid this.

Exercise 66

CD 1: Track 61

Besides strictly alternating between right and left hand slaps, we can use the left hand to fill in the gaps in other slap figures. In this exercise we will add a left hand slap to the second sixteenth note of a common rhythmic figure. The original figure is on beat one; the modified version on beat three.

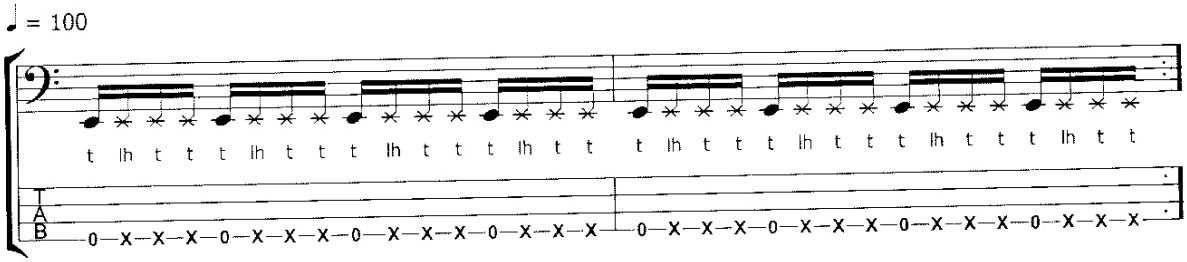
♩ = 100



Exercise 67

CD 1: Track 62

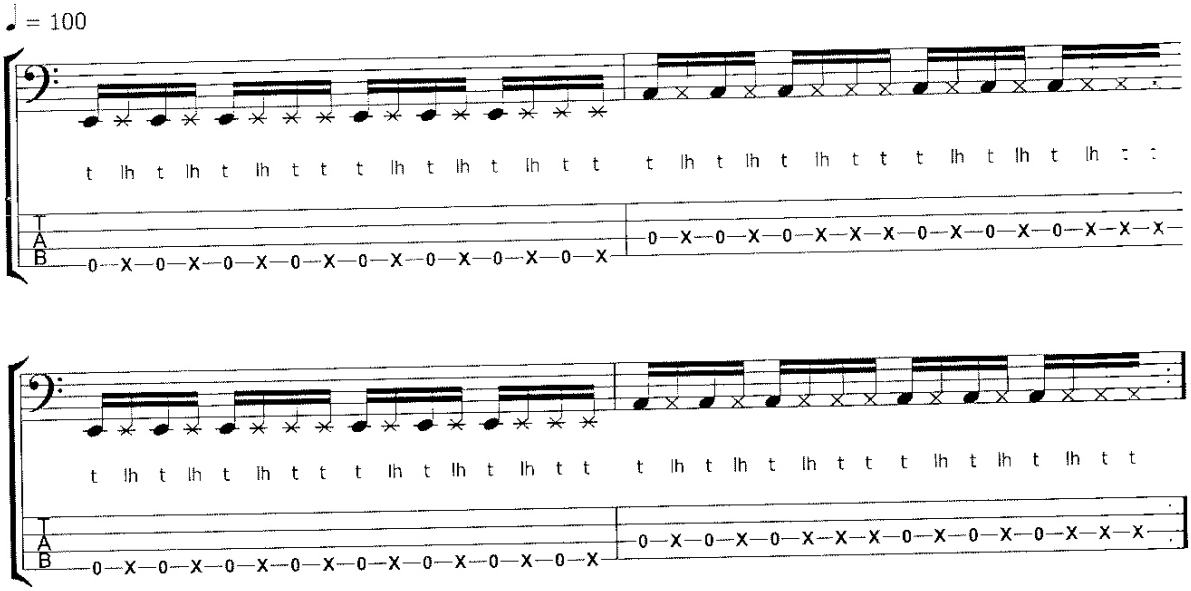
Now let's take the left hand slap figure from the previous exercise and apply it to every beat.



Exercise 68

CD 1: Track 63

Let's now combine what we have played in exercises 65 and 67 into one line. I have notated this on the E and A strings, although it's a good idea to practise new techniques on all strings and in as many different ways as possible



As you can see, by using a combination of both hands, it's possible to play continuous sixteenth notes much quicker than you would be able to do with just your thumb. This kind of exercise can be likened to drumming on the table with your hands, which just about everyone can do - it's that simple.

I like mistakes. Mistakes to me are human and are gateways to progress.

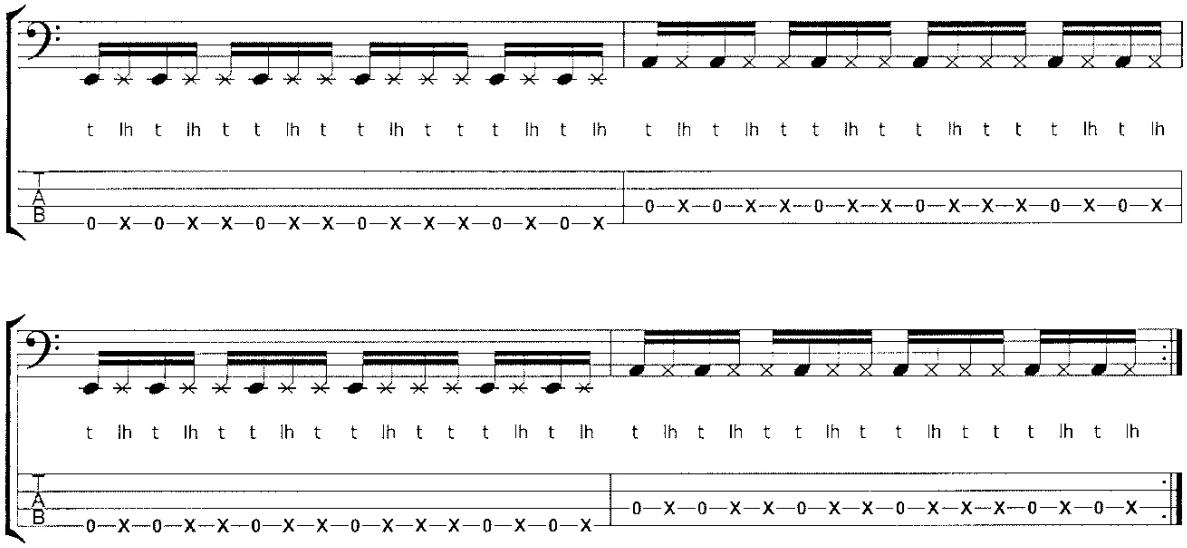
T.M. STEVENS (THE PRETENDERS, JOE COCKER, JAMES BROWN

Exercise 69

CD 1: Track 64

Here is another exercise with a different combination of right and left hand slaps.

♩ = 100

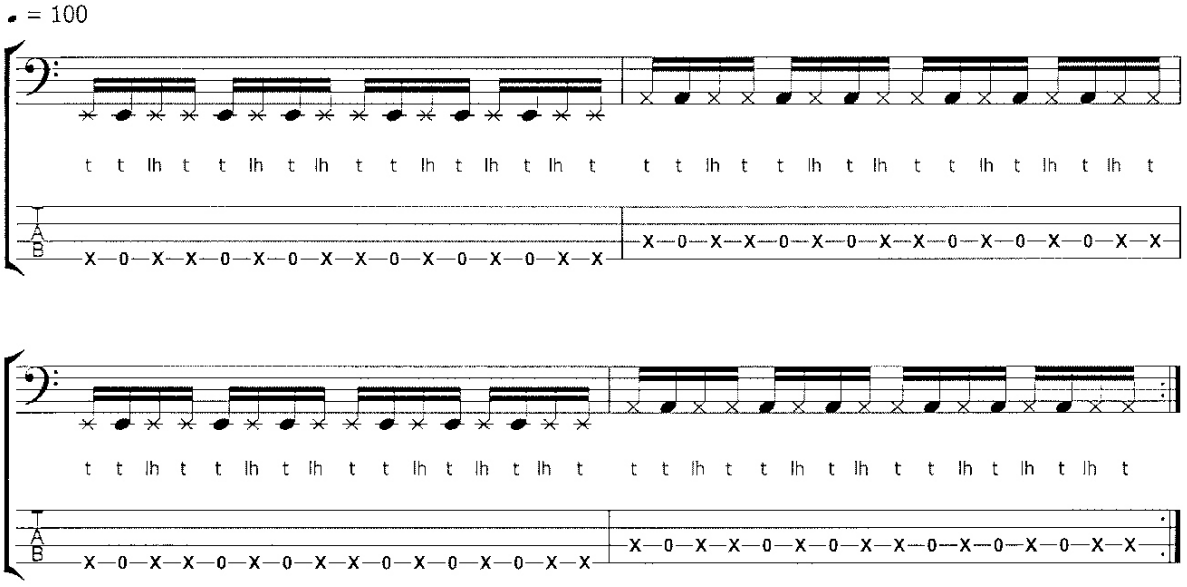


Exercise 70

CD 1: Track 65

And another...

♩ = 100



You should experiment with these kinds of lines yourself now. As well as the exercises presented here, there are many other right/left hand slap combinations. I recommend setting a metronome or drum machine going and playing along. Start with the exercises you have learnt here, and then see if you can expand and develop them.

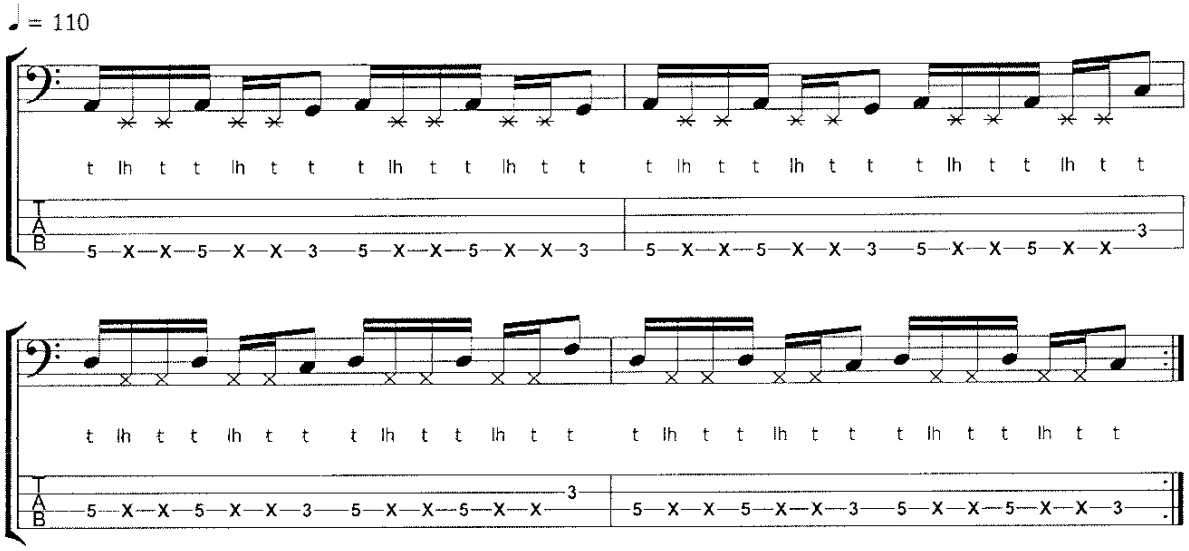
Fretted Notes and the Left Hand Slap

Of course, you can't simply slap the open E string all the time (although it is tempting!), and thankfully the left hand slap works just as well when playing fretted notes. This is a little more difficult since you have to hold down the note while you play the left hand slaps, but the basic technique remains exactly the same.

Exercise 71

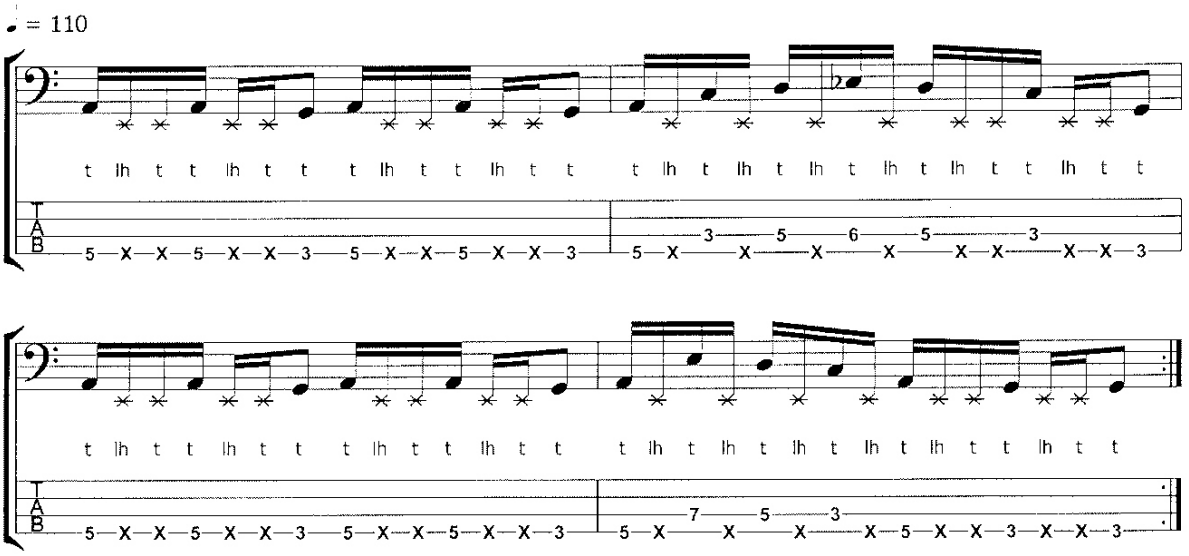
CD 1: Track 66

In this exercise we have a groove featuring fretted notes and left hand slaps. The right/left hand pattern established in the first bar is used for the rest of the exercise. I recommend using the first finger of the left hand to fret the pitched notes in this exercise - this leaves the rest of your fingers free to perform the left hand slaps.



Exercise 72

This exercise is a slightly faster development of the previous exercise. Note the fill in the last bar: you have to play a descending series of fretted notes with a left hand slap in between. This is simpler than it looks; remember that the technique is exactly the same as it is for open strings.



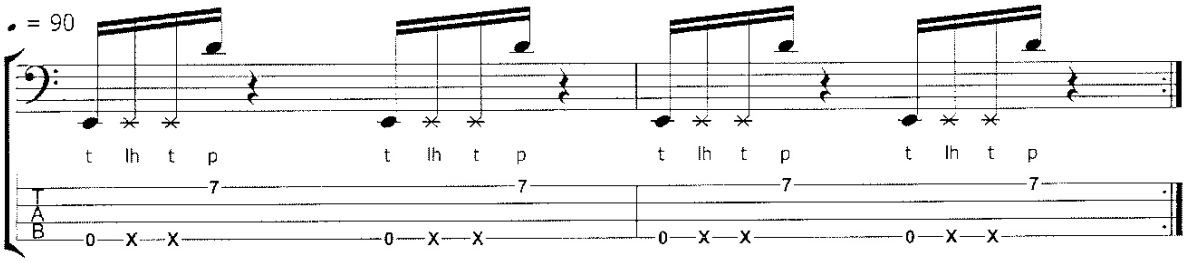
Incorporating Popped Notes

With the combination of right and left hand slaps we have already been able to play some fairly complex sixteenth note grooves. Let's now look at how we can add popped notes into the mix. We are going to go back to trusty old key of E for these exercises, and look at three different groupings of sixteenth notes that incorporate right and left hand slaps and popped notes.

Exercise 73

CD 1: Track 67

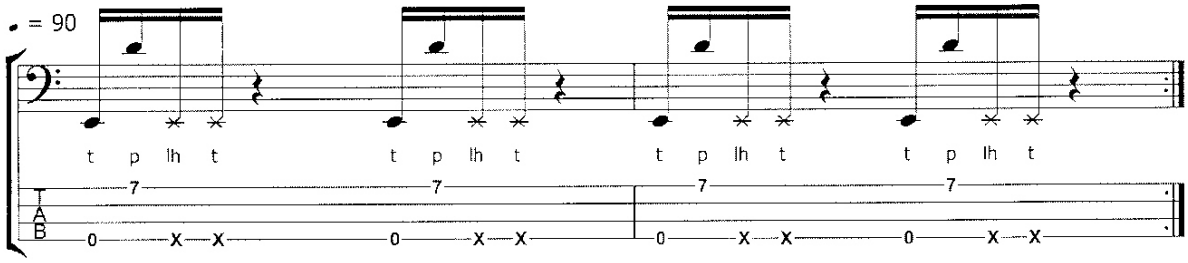
Here is the first grouping that we will look at: t lh t p (*thumb, left hand, thumb, pop*)



Exercise 74

CD 1: Track 68

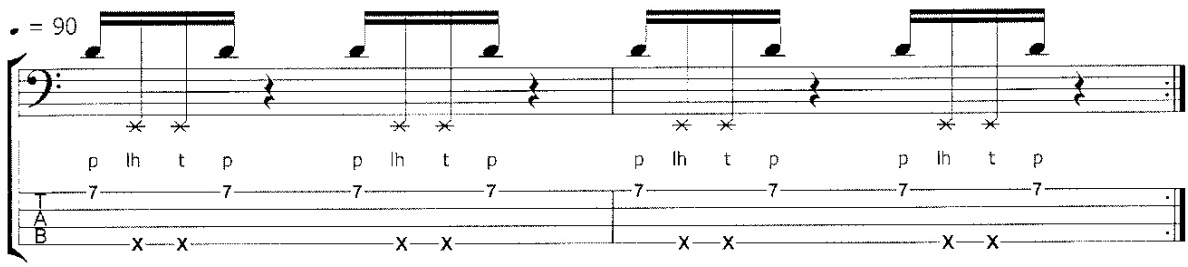
Here is the second grouping: t p lh t (*thumb, pop, left hand, thumb*). You'll find it easier if you use your first finger to fret the D on the G string.



Exercise 75

CD 1: Track 69

Finally, here is the third grouping: p lh t p (*pop, left hand, thumb, pop*). Again, I recommend fretting the D on the G string with your first finger.



You'll find that none of these groupings work particularly well if you repeat them on every beat. They are much better put to use within the context of an exercise. You will get the chance to practise them all in the Exercise Area.

Chapter Summary

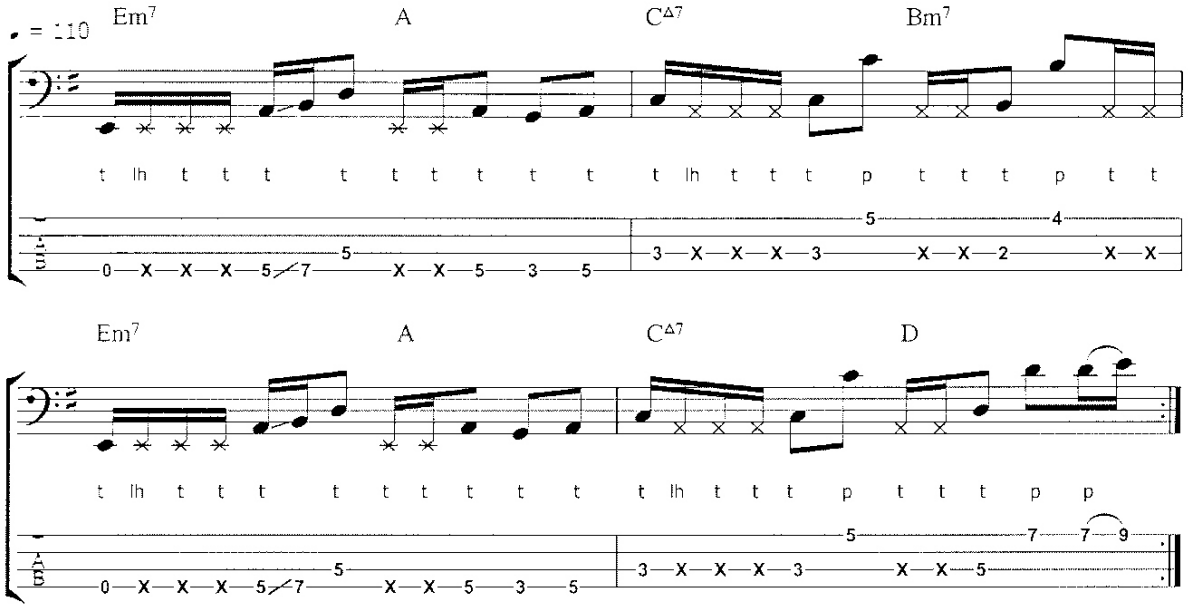
As you will now have discovered, the interplay between the two hands is vital to the accurate performance of these exercises. If you find that you are struggling with any of this material, try to isolate which aspect in particular you have a problem with, then review the chapter, and practise through the exercises that are relevant to the parts you find difficult.

The exercises featured in the following Exercise Area contain some fairly complex rhythmic patterns that require a solid understanding of the information contained in this chapter. These exercises are all based on the sixteenth note feel, and many will contain continuous sixteenth notes. Remember that this is to illustrate the concepts presented in the chapter. While you will occasionally want to fill the gaps in your slap lines for added groove and drive, you certainly don't want to be doing it all the time! As with everything you learn in this book, use this technique with taste.

Exercise 76

CD 1: Track 70

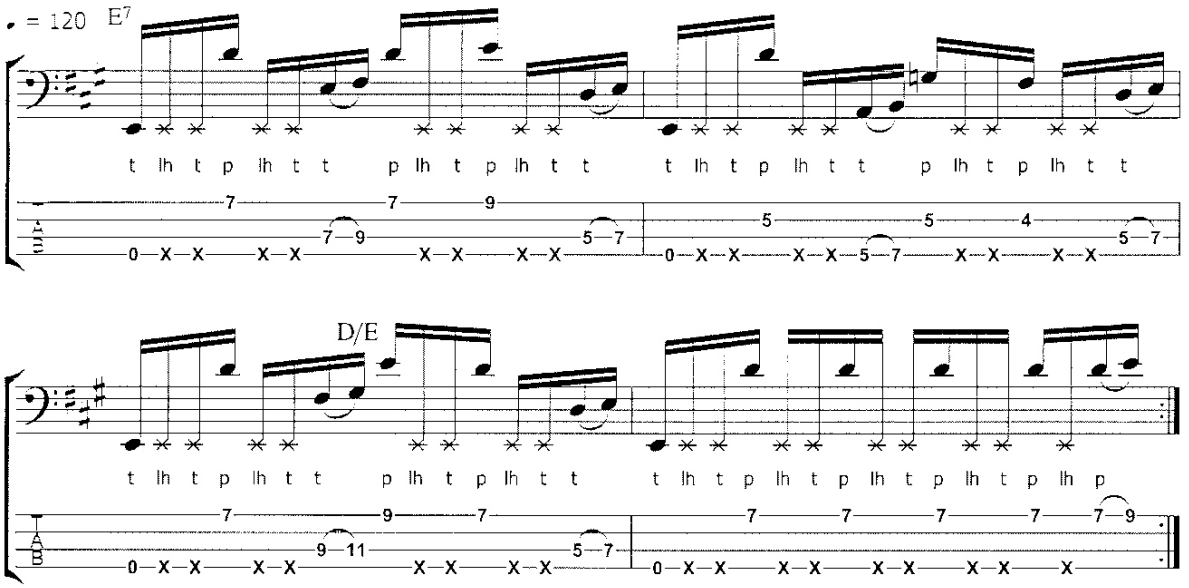
This is quite a straightforward slap line with a left hand slap figure on the first beat of each bar. This is the same figure that we looked at back in exercise 67.



Exercise 77

CD 1: Track 71

This exercise is reminiscent of Mark King's playing in the early days of Level 42. Based around an E^7 key centre, this one features two of the sixteenth note groupings we looked at earlier: *t lh t p* and *p lh t p*. You'll see that the left hand is used in other groupings as well, in combination with hammer-ons. Note that a left hand slap always follows a popped note in this exercise - this is often the case in this busy style of slap and pop. Note that in the second bar I have used a G♮, despite the chord underneath being E^7 (E, G♯, B, D). This is an excellent example of the 'ambiguous third' that we looked at in Chapter 5.

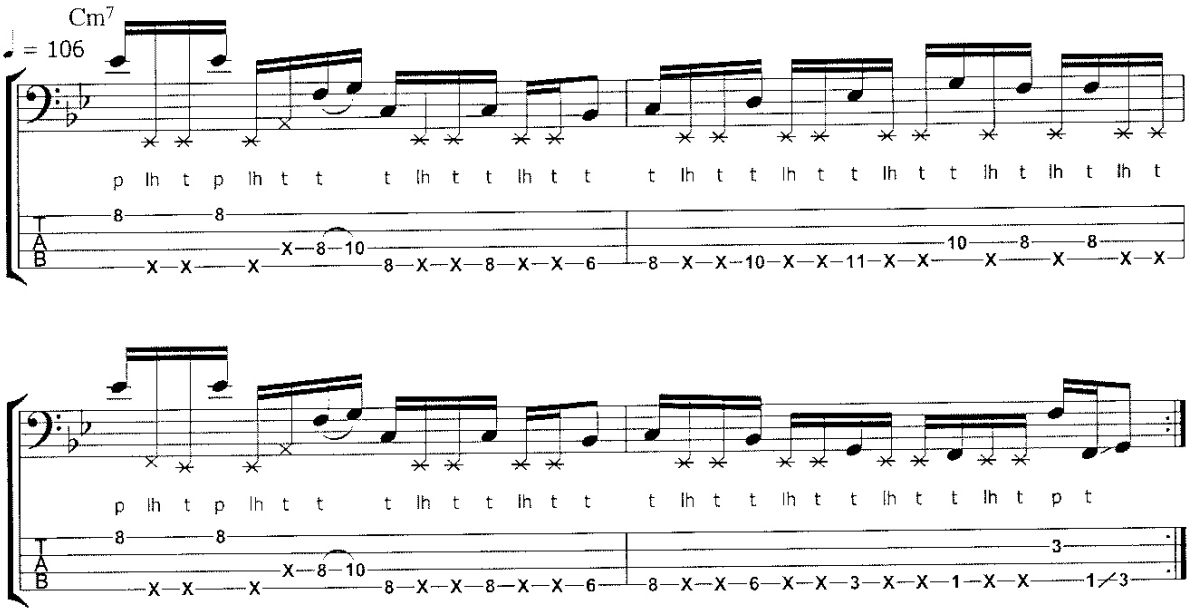


Chapter 6 - Exercise Area

Exercise 78

CD 1: Track 72

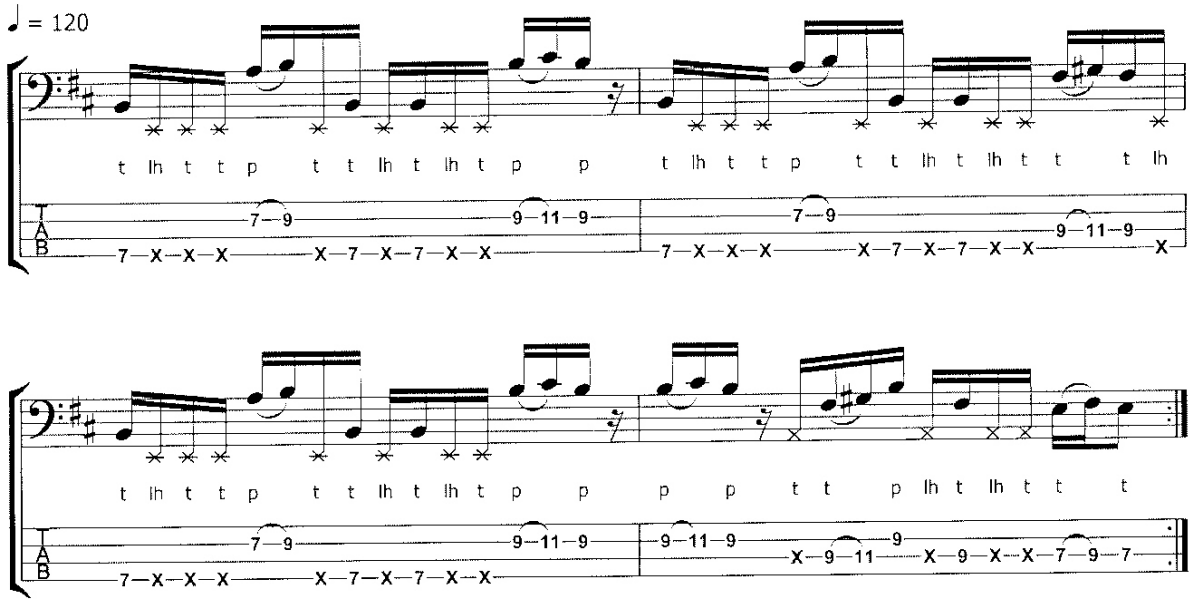
The left hand slaps add a very percussive effect to the line here. Pay attention to the three note groupings (pitched note followed by two ghost notes) in the second and fourth bars - these syncopations add considerable interest to the line and really drive it along.



Exercise 79

CD 1: Track 73

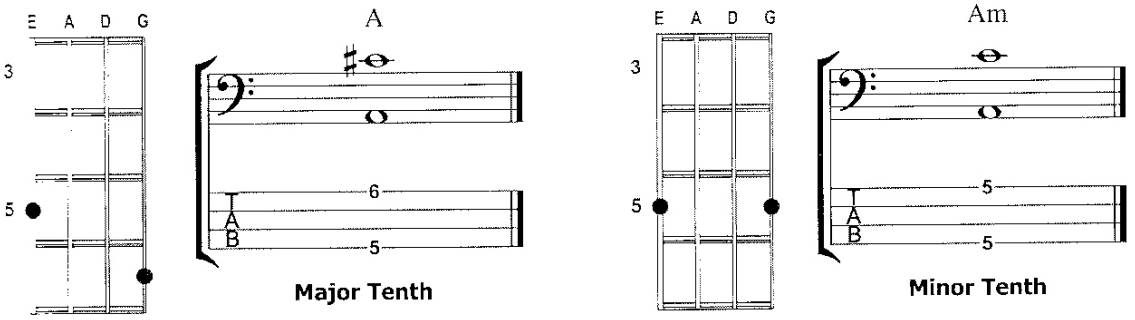
Here's an exercise that will help you practise using the left hand slap with fretted notes. This one has a fast tempo so I would advise practising it slowly with a metronome.



Chapter 7

Introducing Tenths

Another popular musical device that many bass players use - and not just for slap bass - is the tenth. A tenth is a compound interval - a major or minor tenth is exactly the same as a major or minor third, only an octave higher. Tenths help us reinforce the harmony of a line since they illustrate the major or minor quality of a chord. They are often used in slap bass parts in place of the octave since they add more colour to the line. If you listen to and analyse the work of any of the greatest slap players - such as Stanley Clarke, Marcus Miller, Mark King, and Victor Wooten (among others) you will hear many instances where tenths have been used. Here are fretboard diagrams and notation for major and minor tenths for the chords of A and Am respectively:

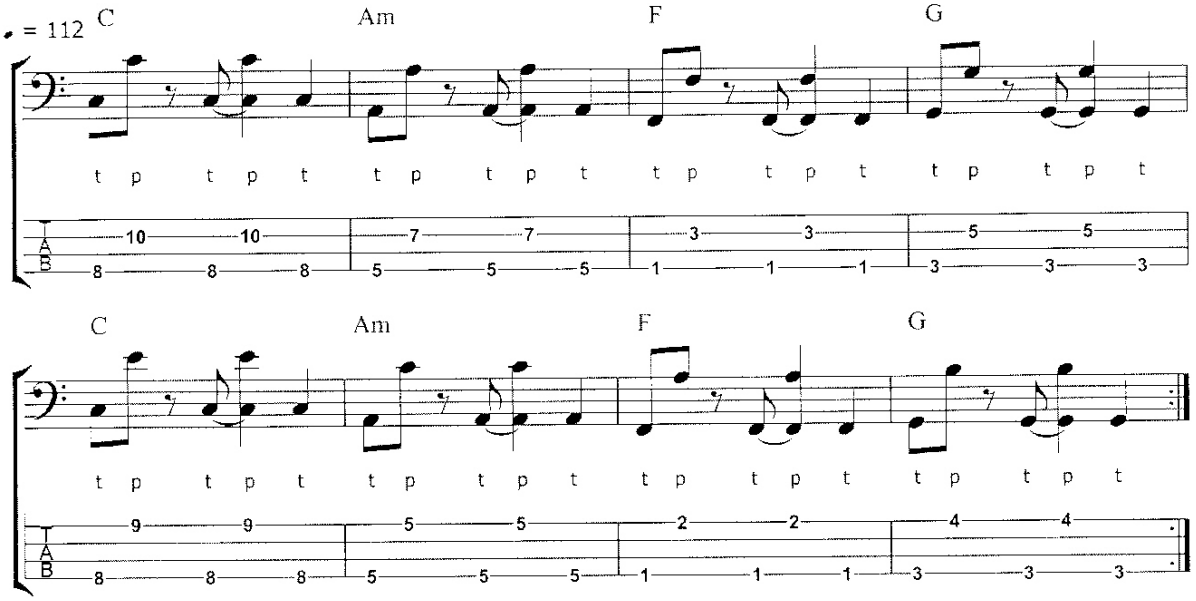


Obviously you can play a tenth for any major or minor chord. Let's see how they work in the context of a groove.

Exercise 80

CD 1: Track 74

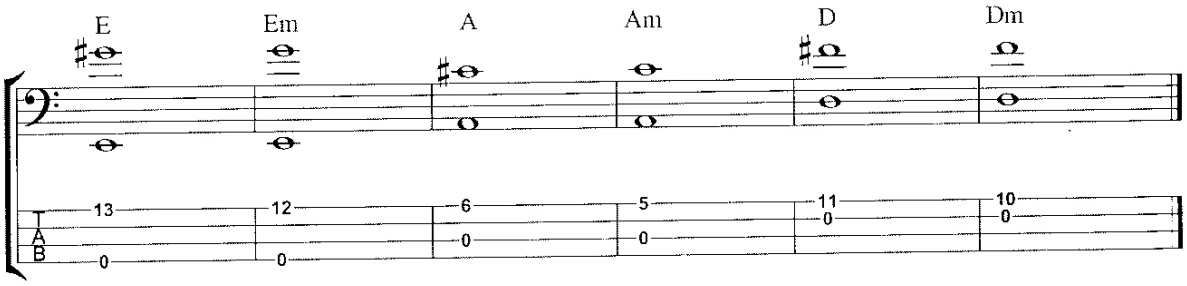
The following is a simple slap and pop line that follows a common chord progression. In the first four bars, octaves are used. In the second four bars, tenths are used instead. Listen to the difference they make to the line - you can hear the underlying harmony just through the bass part. Try playing it without the track as well - you'll be able to hear it even more clearly.



Chapter 7 - Exercise Area

Whenever you play tenths, you'll find that they sound best when you allow both notes to sound together, creating a chordal effect. Two notes played at once are known as a doublestop. Doublestops are covered in more detail in Chapter 9.

Many bass players use tenths in combination with open strings. Here are the six open string major and minor tenths that are possible on a 4-string bass. You'll find these cropping up in many exercises throughout the book.



These open string tenths will certainly be familiar to fans of bassists such as Stanley Clarke, Jaco Pastorius and Mark King. Stanley used them on tracks such as 'School Days' and 'Lopsy Lu', Mark King used them on 'Dune Tune' and 'Return Of The Handsome Rugged Man' and Jaco used them on 'Continuum' and 'Amerika'. These are just a few popular examples of how they can be used effectively in any type of bassline.

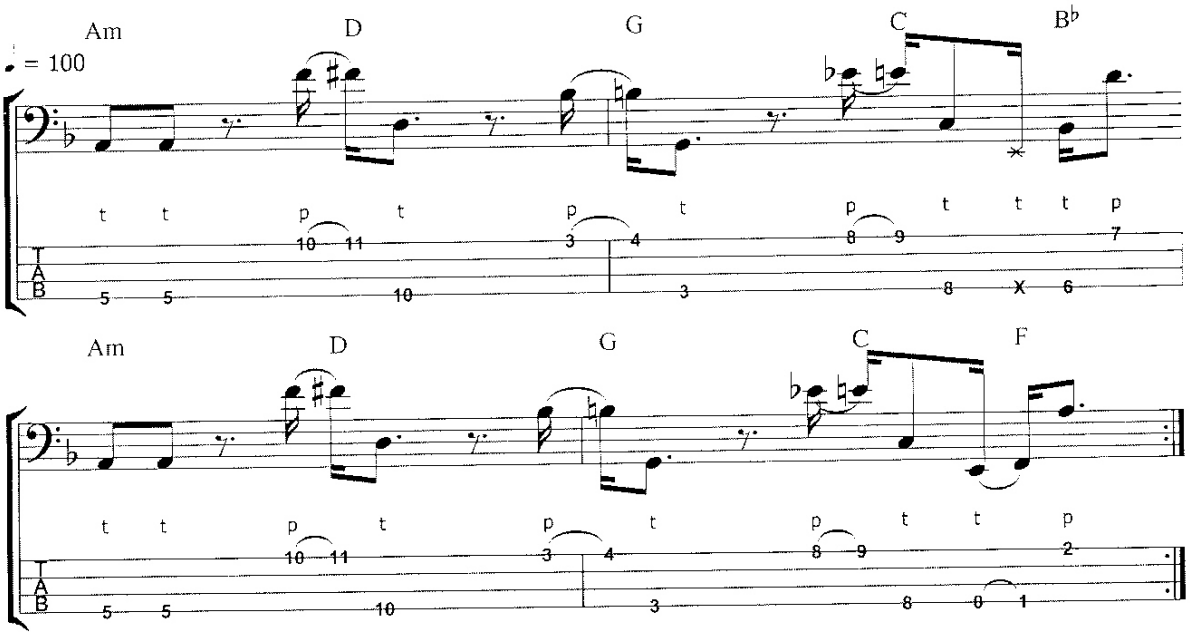
Chapter Summary

In this brief chapter we have studied a valuable tool that can make your slap and pop lines a lot more musical. Let's now look at some exercises that put what we have learnt to good use.

Exercise 81

CD 1: Track 75

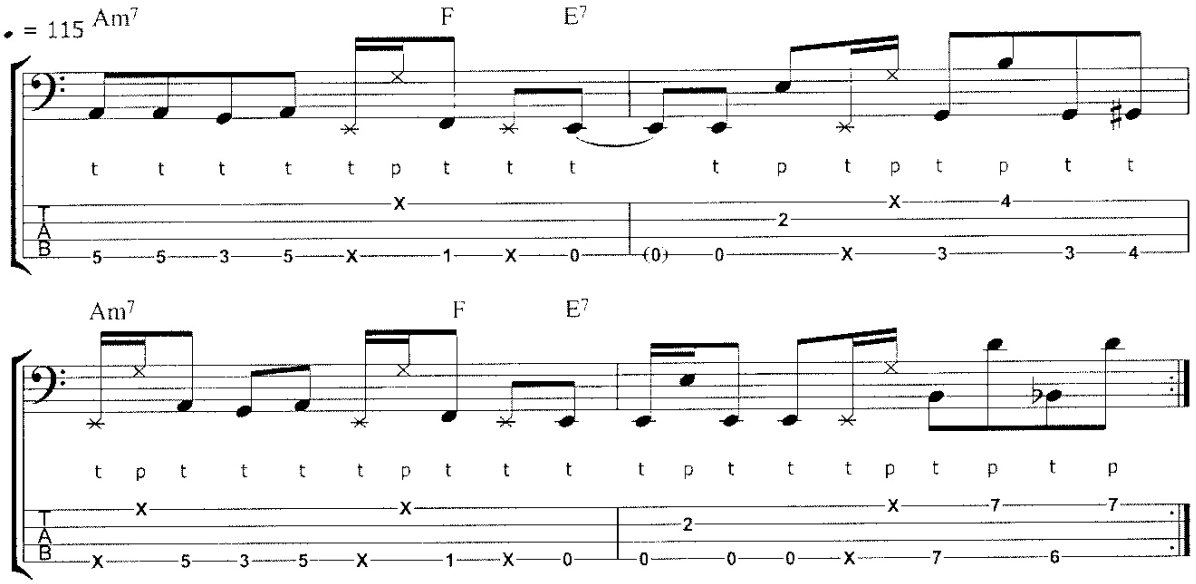
In this exercise the bass part clearly outlines the harmony. Note the use of space, and how the notes ring into each other, creating a chordal effect.



Exercise 82

CD 1: Track 76

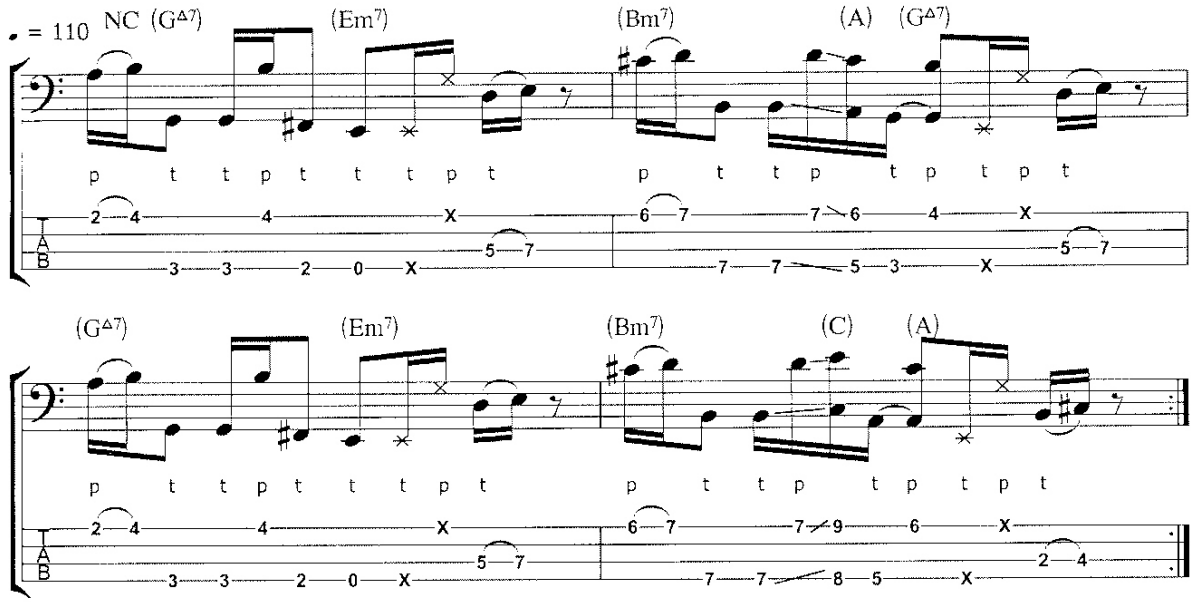
This straight-ahead rock bass part features tenths in the second and fourth bars. Note the descending figure in the fourth bar: the B and D on beat 3 are the fifth and seventh of the Em^7 chord. The B♭ on beat 4 is a passing note, but combined with the D creates a chordal effect that momentarily implies a B♭ chord.



Exercise 83

CD 1: Track 77

This exercise is a busy sixteenth note line that features a lot of tenths. Of particular note are the sliding tenths in the second and fourth bars. These create a chordal effect and are a favourite device for players such as Mark King and Stanley Clarke. Check out Mark King's playing on the Level 42 tracks '43' and 'Can't Walk You Home' and Stanley Clarke's playing on 'Hot Fun' to hear tenths used in a similar way.

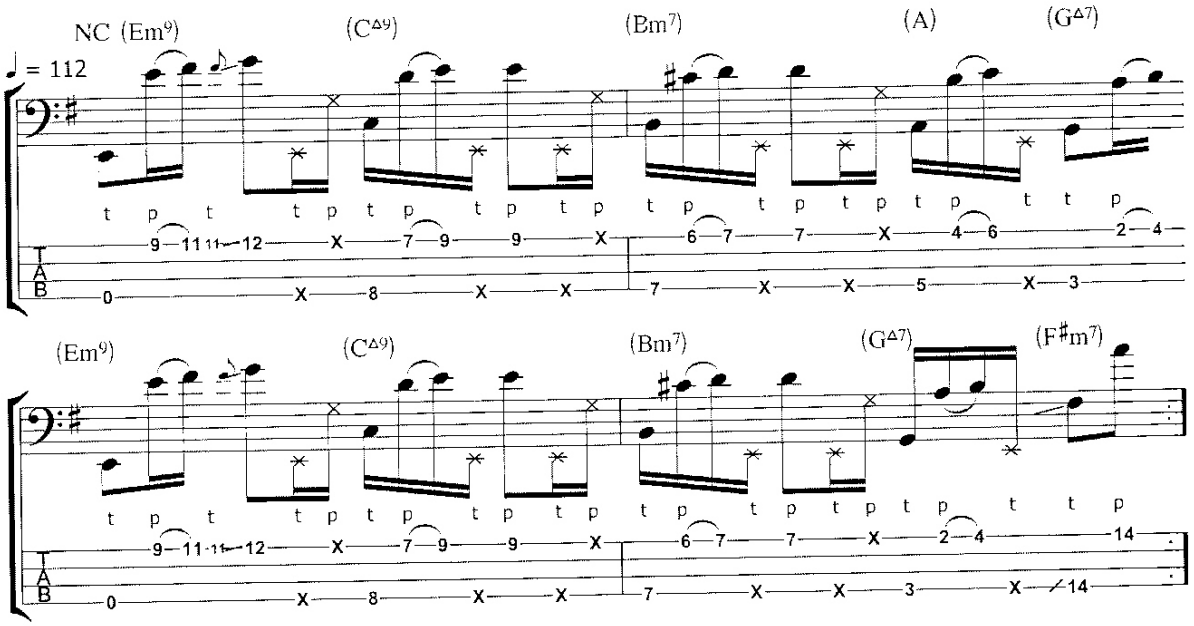


Chapter 7 - Exercise Area

Exercise 84

CD 1: Track 78

Finally, here is a rather complex line that utilises tenths. A tenth has been used for every chord to outline the harmony in a very obvious way. As I mentioned earlier, you should allow both of the notes in each tenth ring together in order to get the full chordal effect.



The bass player affects the harmony, the structure and the dynamics of the song more than anyone else in the band so you really must know what know what everyone is doing rather than just what you are doing.

JOHN PAUL JONES (LED ZEPPELIN)

Chapter 8

Machine Gun Triplets

In Chapter 6 we looked at introducing the left hand slap into our playing. By now you'll know that the combination of left and right hand slapping makes possible some basslines that are unplayable with right hand slaps alone. In this chapter we are going to expand on what we looked at in Chapter 6, and use the two hands to produce what are commonly referred to as 'Machine Gun Triplets.' Needless to say, these go by pretty quickly! These triplets have been used by many bass players over the years, but are probably most synonymous with the playing of Mark King, of pop/funk group Level 42. You should make a point of checking out tracks such as 'Love Games', and live versions of 'Mr. Pink' and '88.' Other players who have used the machine gun triplet include Stuart Hamm, Marcus Miller, P-Nut and Pascal Mulot.

Assuming that you have worked through Chapter 6 and understand how to use left hand slaps in your playing, there is not a great deal else to explain in order for you to be able to play machine gun triplets. The key to mastering the technique is through the repetition of right and left hand coordination exercises. The first few exercises presented here are designed to be played over and over until the left and right hand coordination feels natural. Time spent in the woodshed with these mechanical exercises will help you to better understand and play the later exercises.

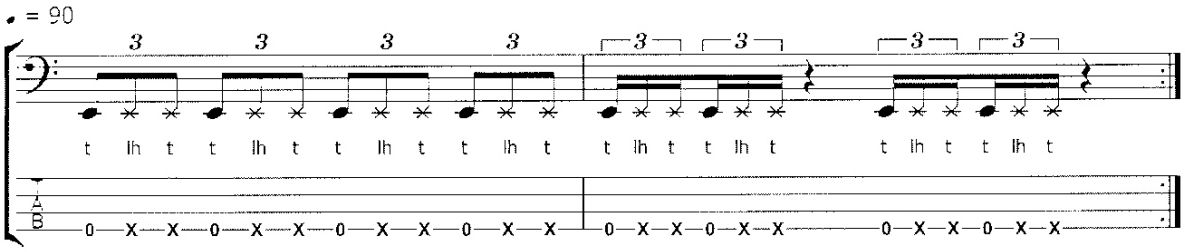
Machine Gun Triplet Pattern 1

We are going to look at two different left and right hand patterns that are commonly used to play machine gun triplets. In the first method you lead with the thumb. After slapping with the thumb, you slap a ghost note with your left hand, then slap again with the thumb. This three-note motif is illustrated below, and is relatively easy to master.

Exercise 85

CD 1: Track 79

In this exercise we are going to play triplets using the slapping pattern as described above. We'll start with eighth note triplets in the first bar, and then double it up to sixteenth note triplets in the second. Note that in the second bar I have used rests to break up what would be a very relentless two hand pattern. This exercise may not sound particularly interesting, but it will get your hands accustomed to the technique. Work on this exercise slowly to begin with, and don't be tempted to rush it. I would advise playing it out of time until you have it under your hands, then playing along to either the track or a metronome.

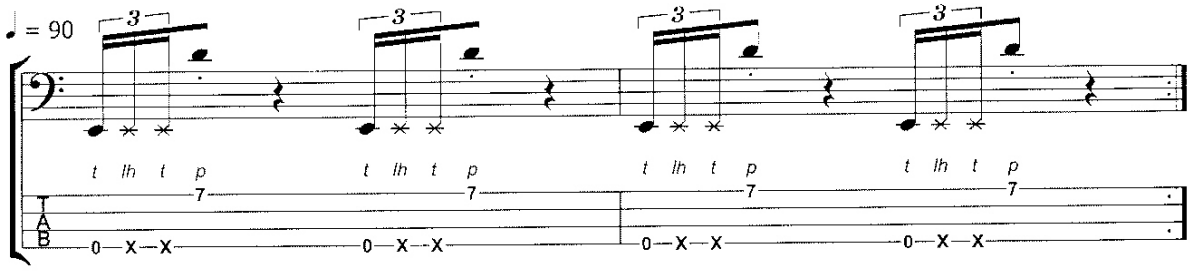


A popped note often follows this three-note figure. You may recall that we looked at the four-note pattern of thumb-left hand-thumb-pop back in Chapter 6, using sixteenth notes. This first method of playing machine gun triplets follows exactly the same pattern, but using the triplet rhythm.

Exercise 86

CD 1: Track 80

This is another mechanical exercise that is designed to let you practise the triplet motif followed by a popped note. I have used sixteenth note triplets here, but the tempo is quite slow. Don't move onto the next exercises until the two hand coordination in this exercise and the previous one feels completely natural.

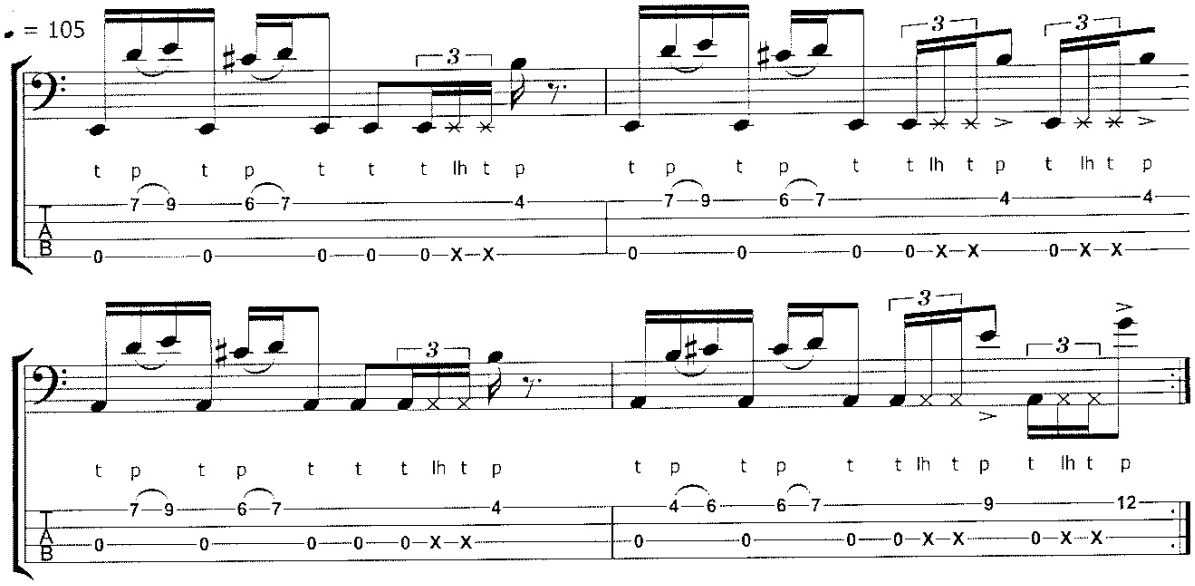


Let's now look at some exercises that put this first machine gun triplet pattern to use.

Exercise 87

CD 1: Track 81

This exercise is a funk line in E minor. Open keys such as E and A are ideal for these machine gun triplets since the open strings make excellent jumping off points. Try to keep the open strings ringing in the first two beats of each bar as you can hear on the CD.



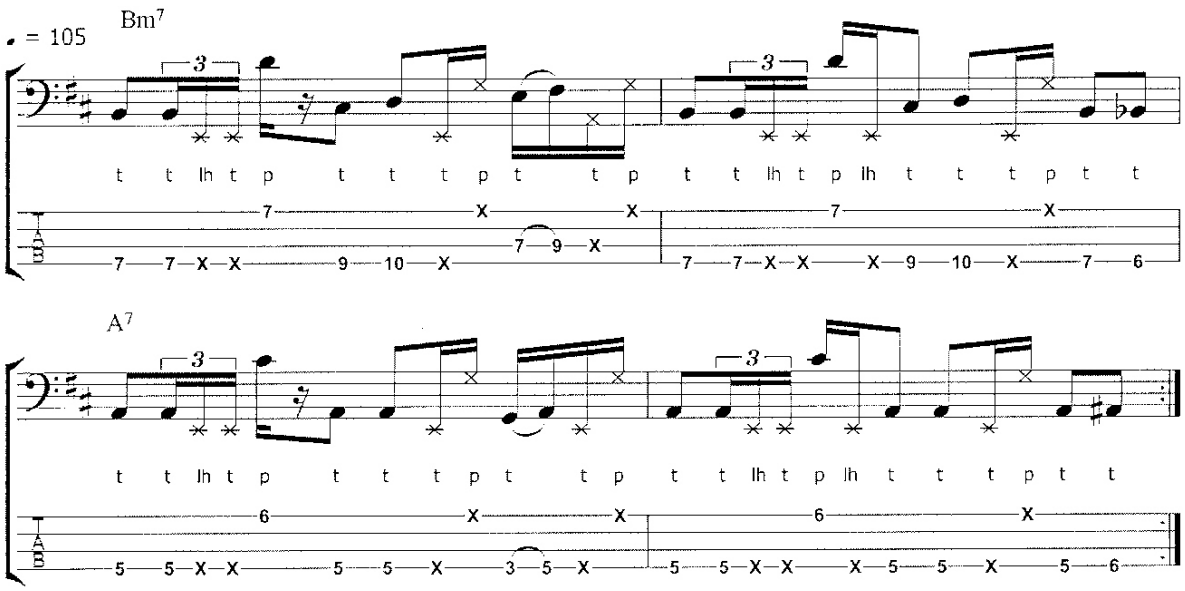
Funk to me is not to do with technique, it's to do with the way you live and how you feel.

T.M. STEVENS (THE PRETENDERS, JOE COCKER, SOLO ARTIST)

Exercise 88

CD 1: Track 82

While these triplet figures most certainly work well in open keys, that is not to say they can't be used in any key. This exercise features machine gun triplets that begin from fretted notes. The technique used to play them is exactly the same. I recommend using your first finger to fret the pitched notes of the triplet, and also for the popped note immediately after. You'll have to jump it from the E string to the G, but I think you'll find this is the easiest fingering for the exercise.



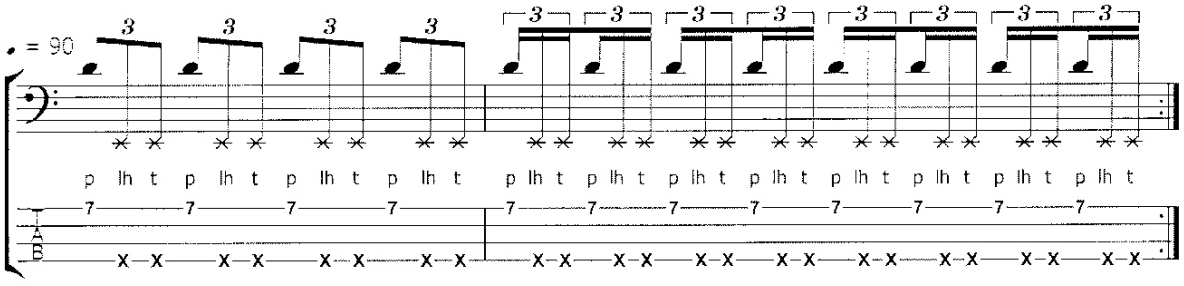
Machine Gun Triplet Pattern 2

The second method for playing machine gun triplets is by leading with a popped note. This is then followed by a left hand slap, then a thumb slap.

Exercise 89

CD 1: Track 83

This exercise illustrates the second machine gun triplet pattern first as eighth note triplets then as sixteenth note triplets. As with the previous pattern, I recommend practising this pattern out of time until you have mastered the left right hand coordination. Once it feels natural, try playing it along with the CD or with a metronome.

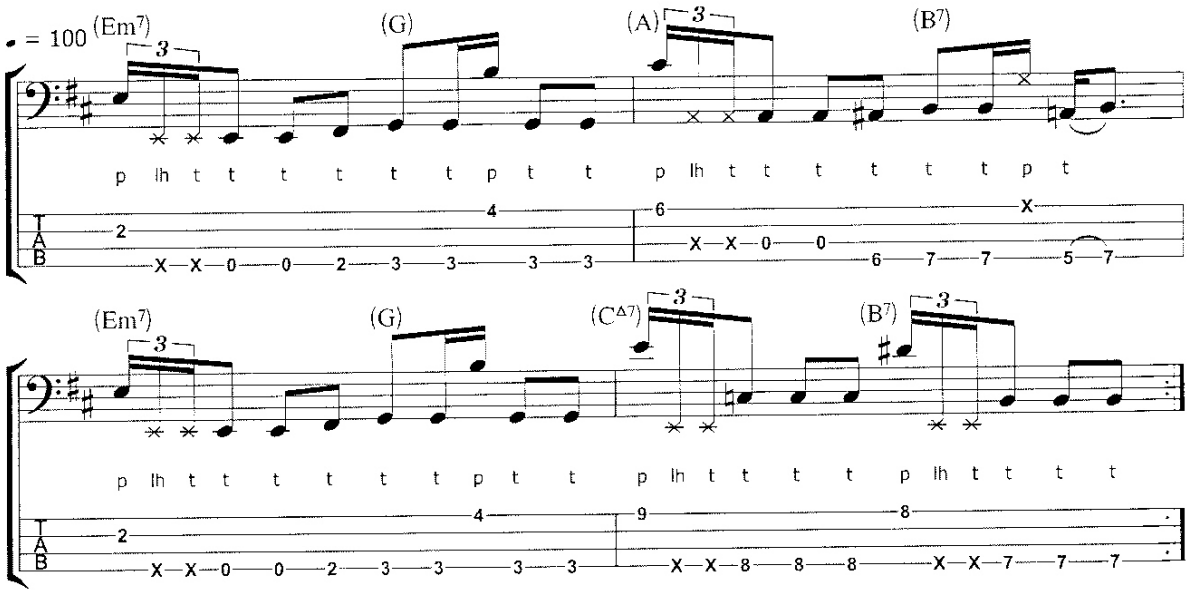


Let's now integrate this second triplet figure into some basslines.

Exercise 90

CD 1: Track 84

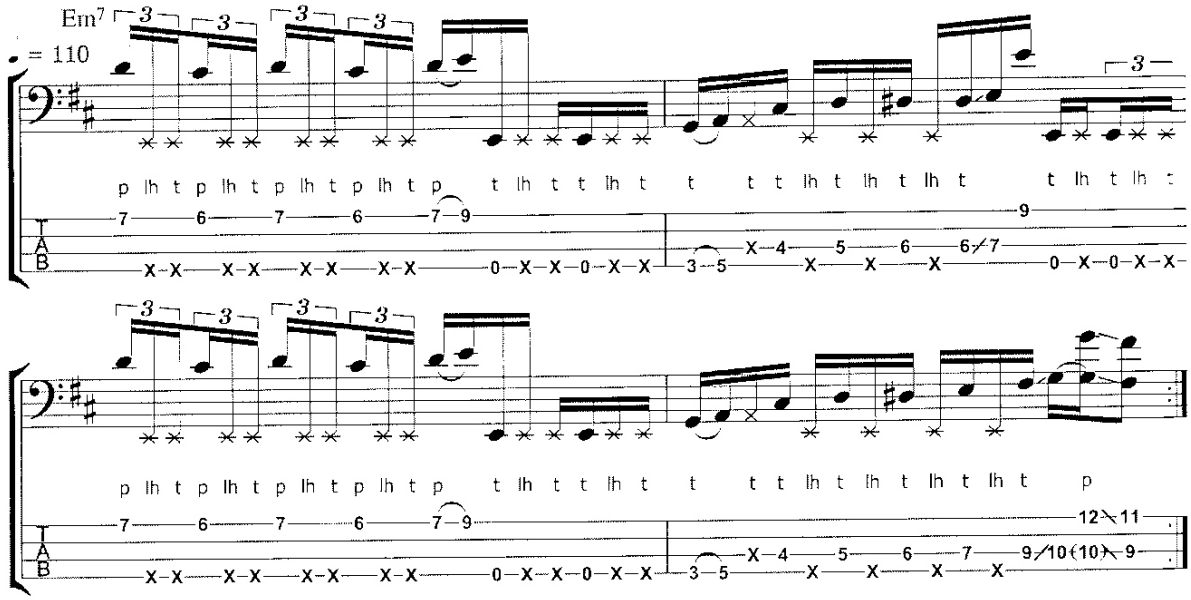
This exercise features the new triplet figure on the first beat of every bar. It acts as an interesting rhythmic figure that gives the line some lift each time it comes around. Note that I have also used several tenths in this line to reinforce the chord progression.



Exercise 91

CD 1: Track 85

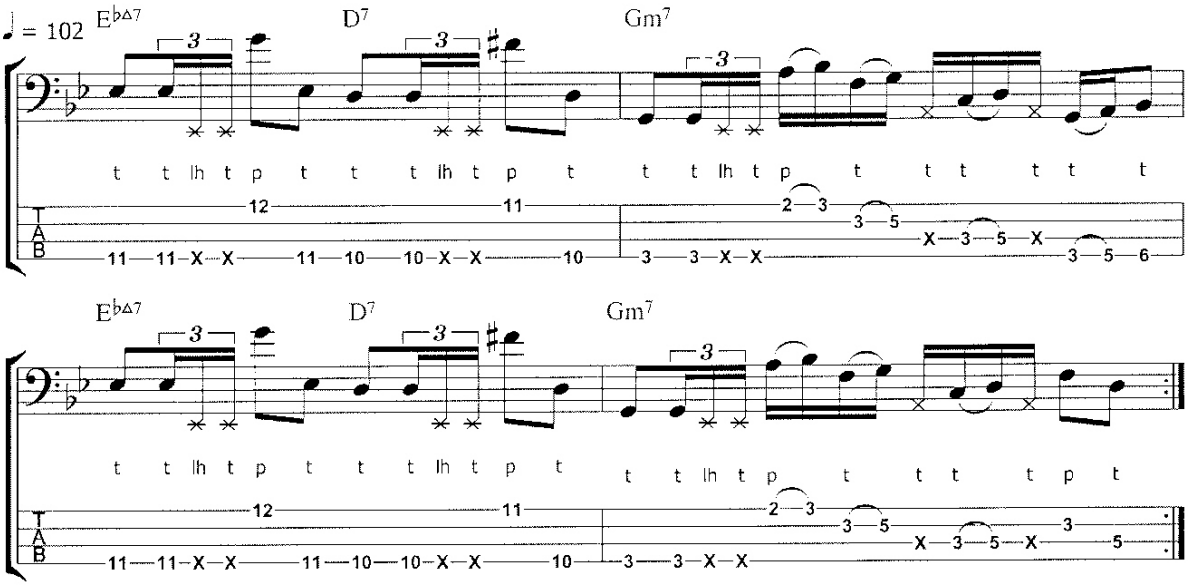
This exercise is a complex sixteenth note line that features a barrage of machine gun triplets on the first two beats of bars 1 and 3. Follow the slap guides carefully on this one and take your time. The sliding figure on the last beat of bar 4 is played by slapping the F♯, sliding up to the G, popping the G an octave above while allowing the lower G to continue ringing, then sliding both notes down to the F♯'s at the ninth and eleventh frets. This line is another lick that is reminiscent of Mark King's playing style.



Exercise 92

CD 1: Track 86

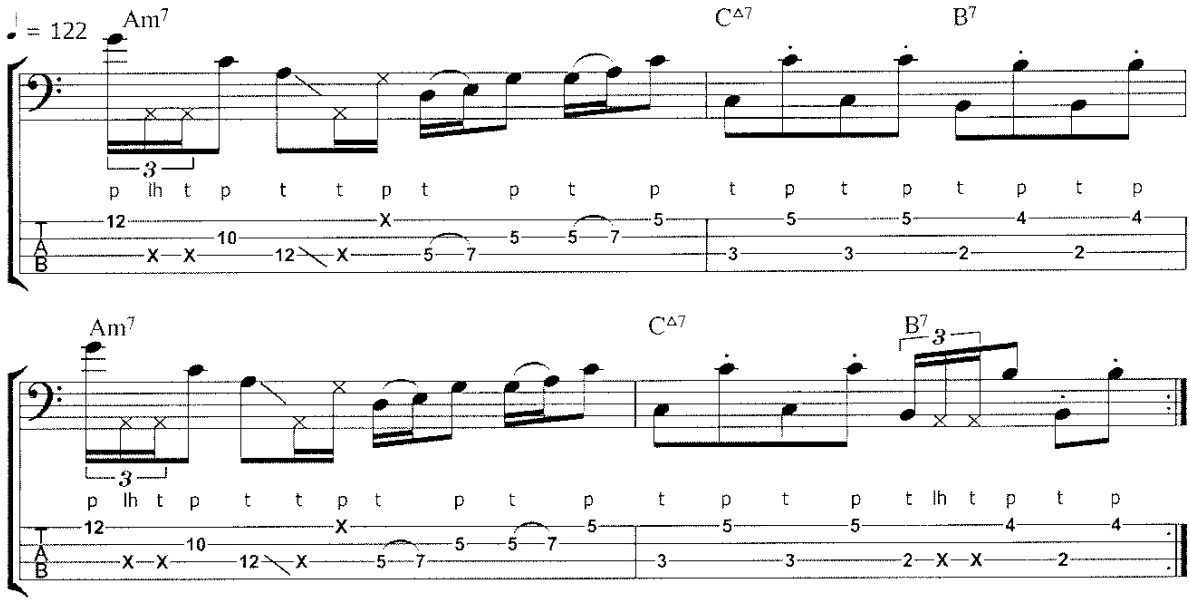
This exercise features many machine gun triplets that follow fretted notes. For the figure in the second bar I would recommend fretting the low G with your second finger. This will allow you to play the hammer-on from the A to the B♭ on the G string with your first and second fingers.



Exercise 93

CD 1: Track 87

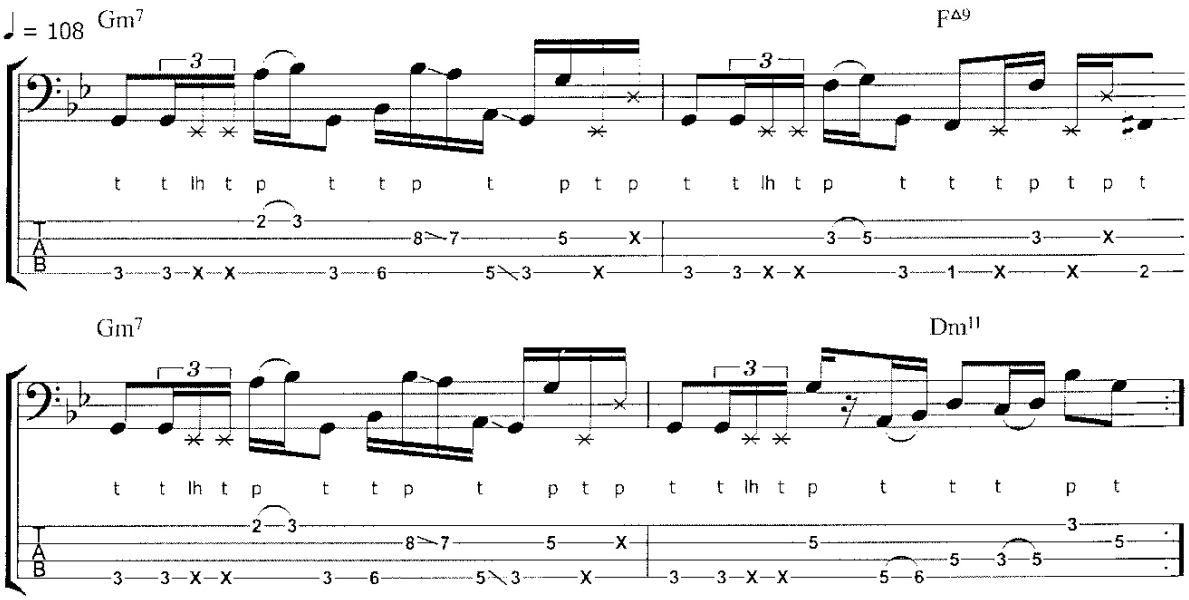
This exercise features both of the machine gun triplet patterns that we have looked at in this chapter. The first leads with a pop and occurs at the beginning of bars 1 and 3. This one is used to add rhythmic lift to the line. The second begins with the thumb and occurs in bar 4. Note the use of staccato notes in bars 2 and 4; these lend the line a disco feel that is reminiscent of Stuart Zender's playing on the Jamiroquai track 'Emergency On Planet Earth'.



Exercise 94

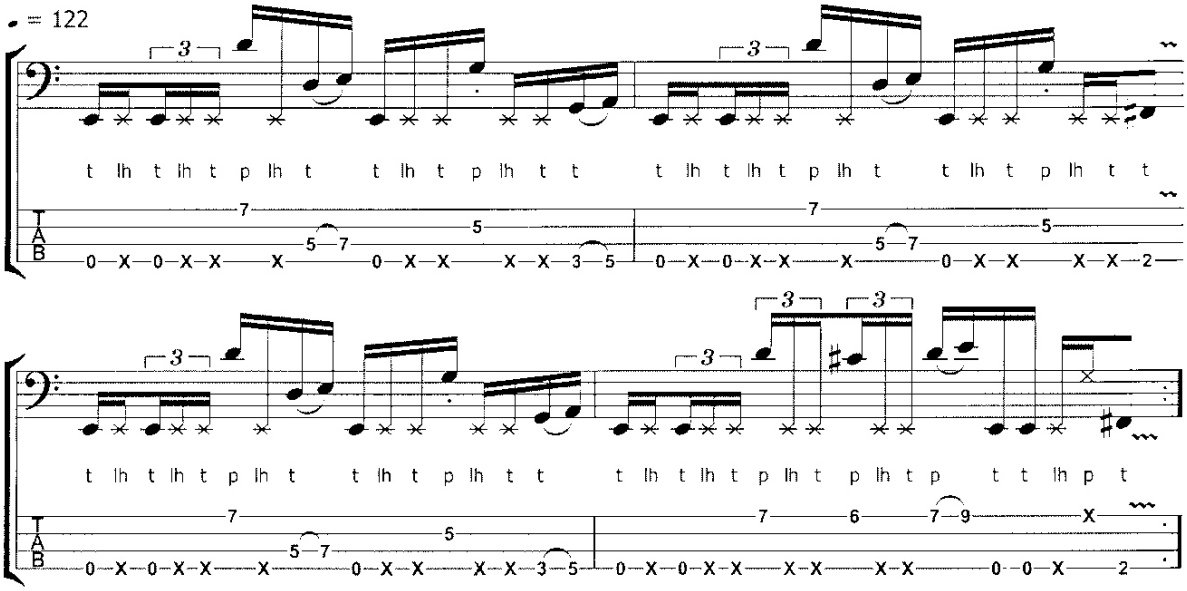
CD 1: Track 88

This exercise makes use of the first triplet pattern that we studied in this chapter. You will need to adept at playing these triplets from fretted notes, as this line is in the key of G minor - not an open string in sight! There are also some sliding octave figures in the first and second bars - we looked at these in Chapter 7.



Exercise 95

This line is also in the style of some of the lines that Mark King played with Level 42. Based around the open E, this exercise contains both triplet patterns, and a lot of ghosting. Be sure to add vibrato to the F♯'s at the end of the second and fourth bars.

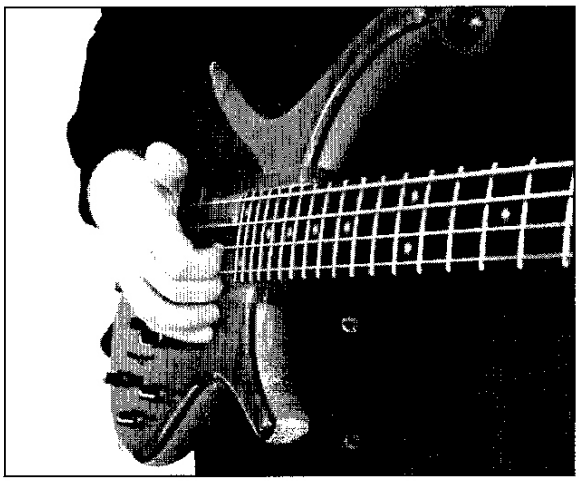


Chapter 9

Doublestops

In this chapter we are going to learn about the doublestop. A doublestop is simply two notes - any two notes - that are played together. They are used to add more tonal character to a line and reinforce the underlying harmony - in other words, they are another tool to add to your bag of tricks for when you want to spice up your slap playing. Doublestops can be fourths, fifths, octaves, tenths or any other pair of intervals, although as you'll discover some are more popular than others, particularly when playing in the slap style.

Slap bassists have been using doublestops from the very earliest days of the slap and pop technique. Stanley Clarke put them to good use on bass anthems such as 'School Days', 'Hot Fun', and 'Lopsy Lu', Marcus Miller used them extensively on tracks such as 'Power' and 'Scoop' and the Red Hot Chili Peppers' track 'Blood Sugar Sex Magik' just wouldn't have been the same without them. There is a list of other tracks that feature doublestops I would recommend checking out below.



Doublestops are most commonly played by popping with the first and second fingers simultaneously. This is shown in the photograph above.

Whether you generally prefer to pop notes with your first or second finger it's advisable to be able to use both, not only for playing doublestops, but also for some of the techniques that we'll look at later in the book such as double popping. Note that for clarity, doublestops are still notated in the slap guides with a single p.

Although doublestops are most often played this way, it should be noted that there are many other ways to play two notes at the same time. In Chapter 7 we looked at tenths, which can be considered to be doublestops if both notes are played at the same time. Doublestops can also be strummed with the fingers - strumming is covered in Chapter 10.

TIP! For some great examples of some bass grooves that feature doublestops, I recommend checking out the following tracks:

1. 'School Days' - Stanley Clarke
2. 'Hot Fun' - Stanley Clarke
3. 'Sexually Active' - Stuart Hamm
4. 'The Urge' - Stuart Hamm
5. 'The Hammer' - Stuart Hamm
6. 'Blood Sugar Sex Magik' - Red Hot Chili Peppers
7. 'True Men Don't Kill Coyotes' - Red Hot Chili Peppers
8. 'Stomping Grounds' - Béla Fleck & The Flecktones
9. 'Feel The Need' - Graham Central Station
10. 'Power' - Marcus Miller

I played bass in my room 14 hours a day for four years and transcribed every little score from Stanley Clarke, Level 42, Jaco, George Benson and Toto. Things like Stevie Wonder's 'Sir Duke'. Every kind of music to become a great musician....

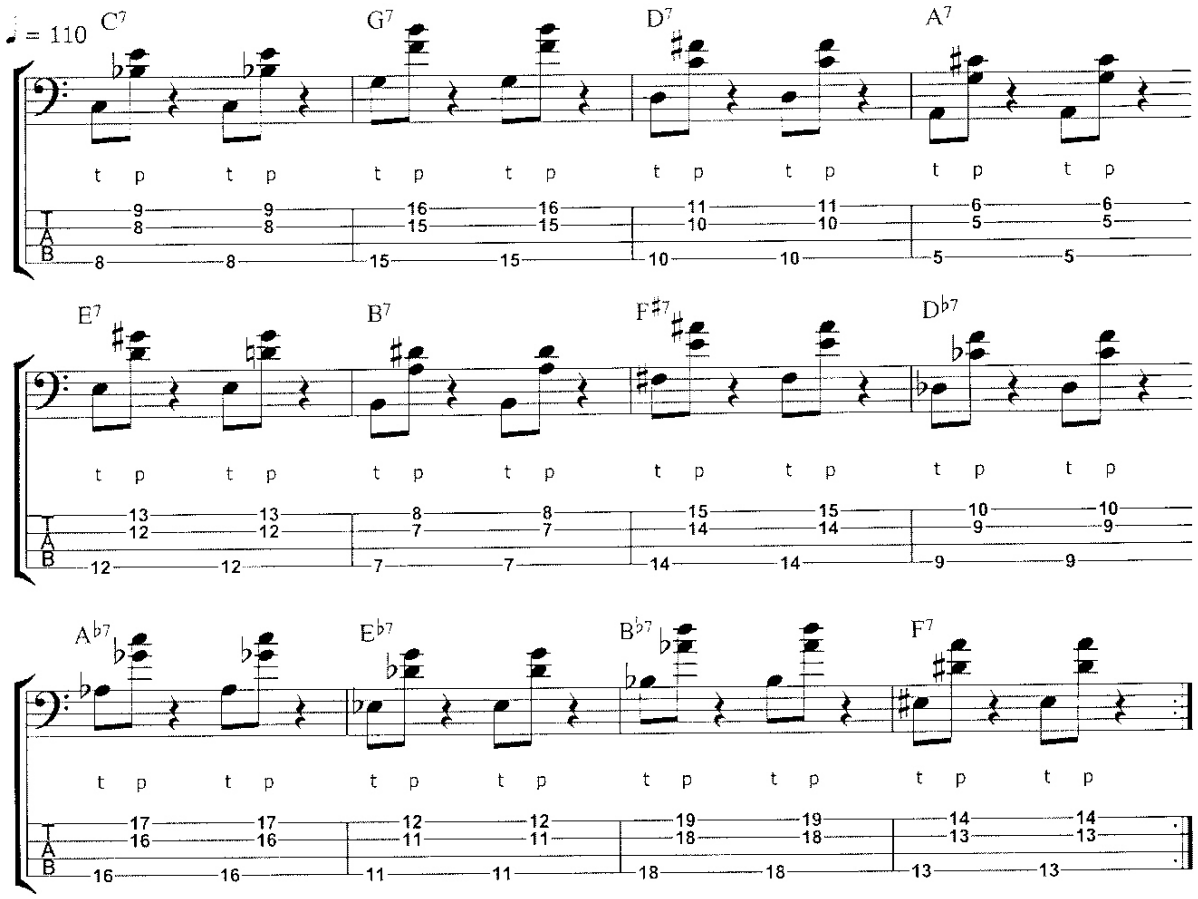
PASCAL MULOT

I encourage people to transcribe the work of other bass players as well as all instruments, and just play along and try to assimilate the music.

MARK EGAN

Exercise 96

To get started with doublestops, we going to play a series of dominant seventh chords, following the circle of fifths. For each of these chords, you will slap the root with your thumb, then play the seventh and third (which in this case is actually a tenth) with your first and second fingers.

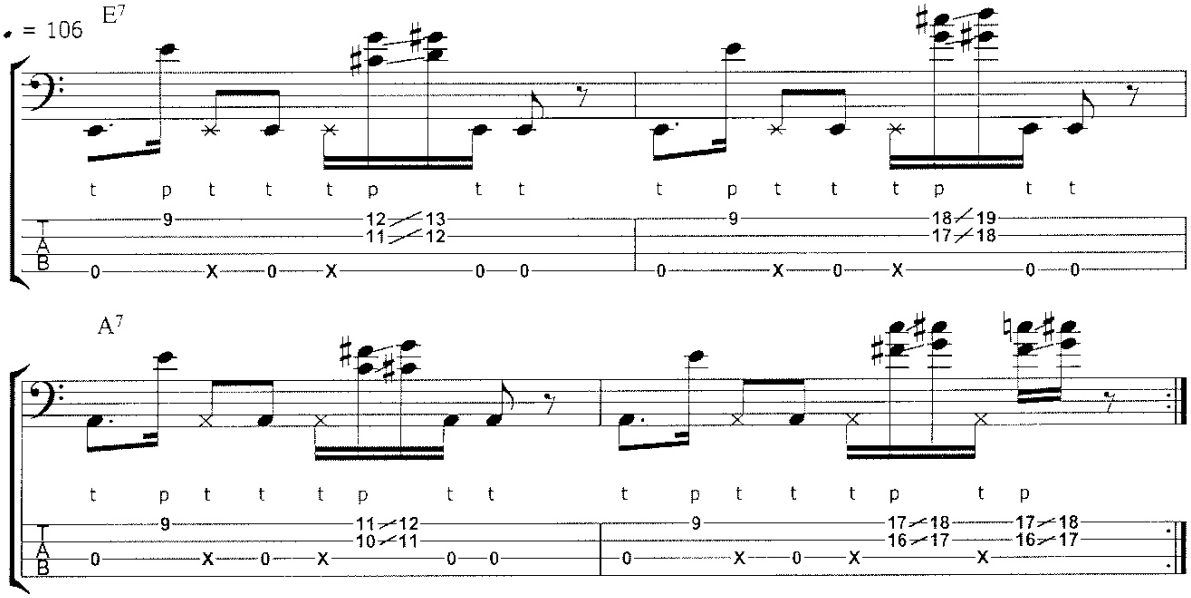


You'll hear that the dominant quality of each chord comes through very clearly when played like this. This is because we have taken the most colourful notes from the chord - the third and seventh - to use as our doublestop. Since this type of doublestop is so common in funk music, I refer to it as the 'funk doublestop.' We will now look at a couple of exercises that make use of it.

Exercise 97

CD 1: Track 89

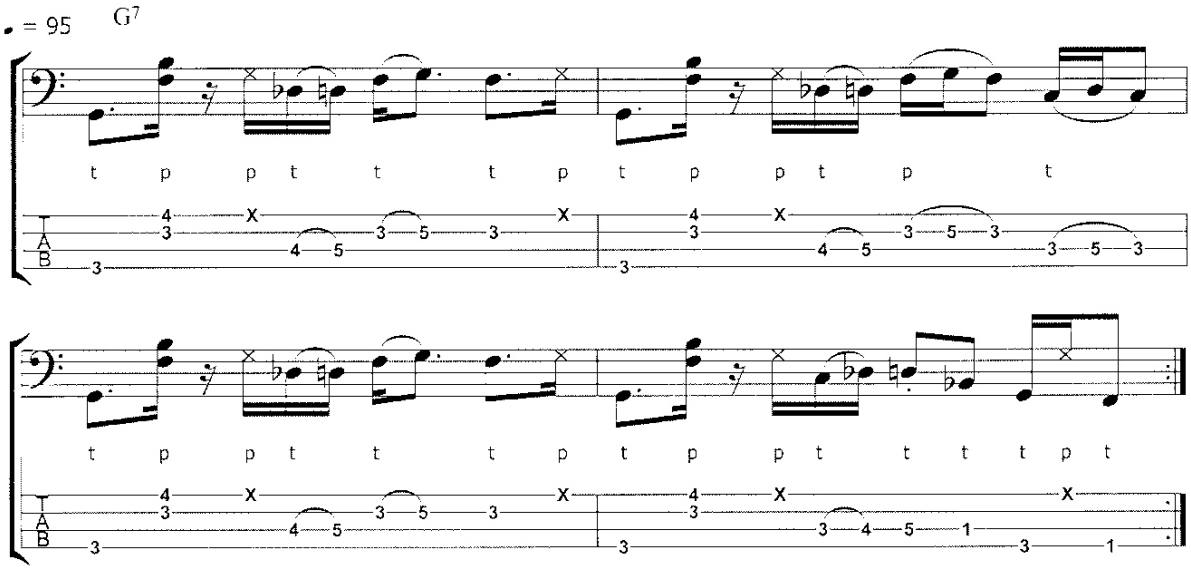
This is a classic funk line that utilises funk doublestops. Note that the doublestops in the second bar of each phrase are an *inversion* of the ones in the previous bar. Because the seventh and third of the chord are a flattened fifth apart, either one can go on top of the other. In bar 1, we have a D with a G♯ on top, (ignoring the notes which slide into the chord) whereas in bar 2 there is a G♯ with a D on top. You should make yourself comfortable with both inversions in all keys, since these doublestops in particular work well in many styles.



Exercise 98

CD 1: Track 90

Here's another funk groove that utilises the funk doublestop. Remember to let the G on the first beat of the bar (the root note) ring while you play the doublestop. This will enhance the chordal effect.

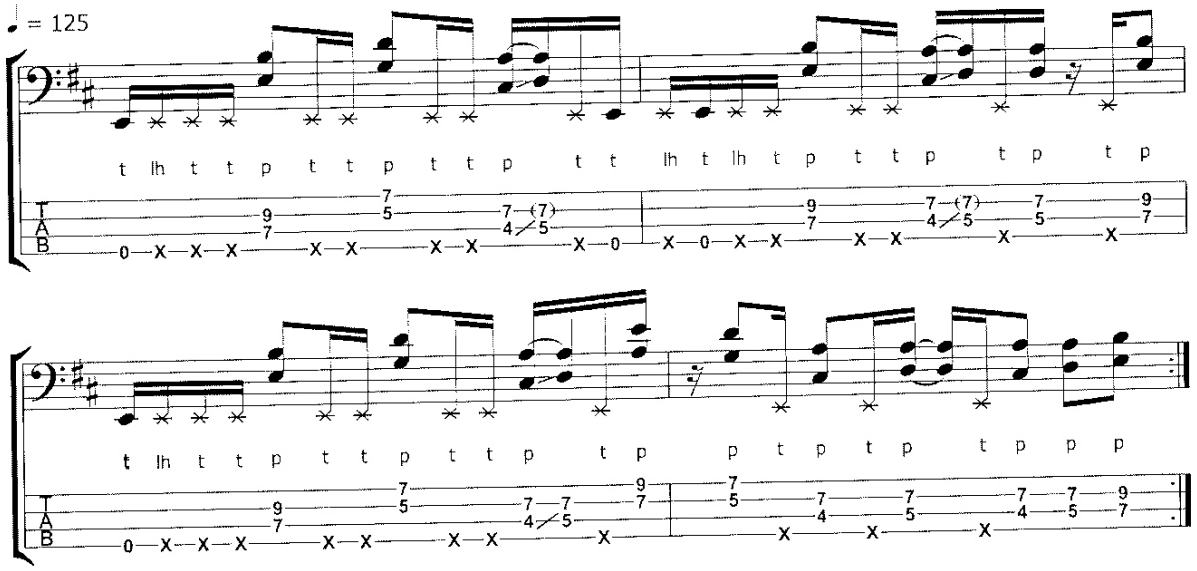


Of course, doublestops can be any two notes popped together. Lets now look at some exercises where different intervals are used.

Exercise 99

CD 1: Track 91

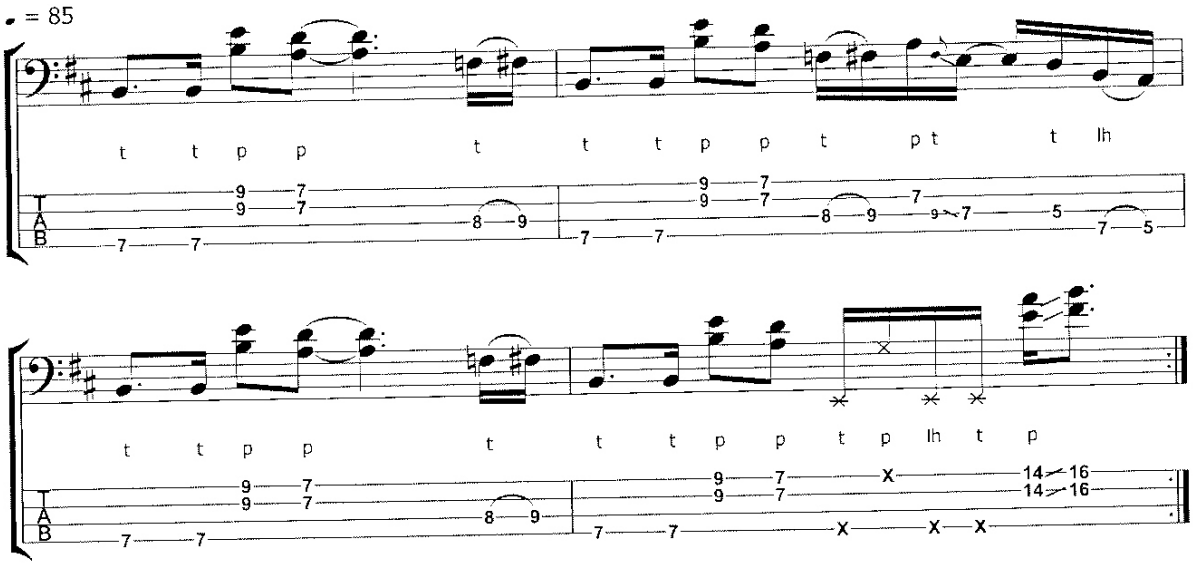
In this exercise our doublestops are fifths. This is another very common use for the doublestop. This one has a hard rock feel and is very similar to something that a rhythm guitarist might play. For the figure on beat 4 of the first bar, you pop the C♯ and A together and slide the C♯ up into the D while the A continues to ring. This idea recurs throughout the line.



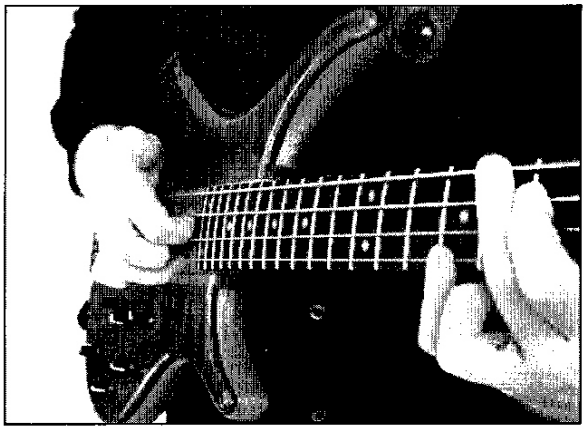
Exercise 100

CD 1: Track 92

This slow exercise also has a hard rock feel. The first doublestop of each bar is played by barring across the D and G strings with the fourth finger. The second doublestop is played by barring with the first finger.



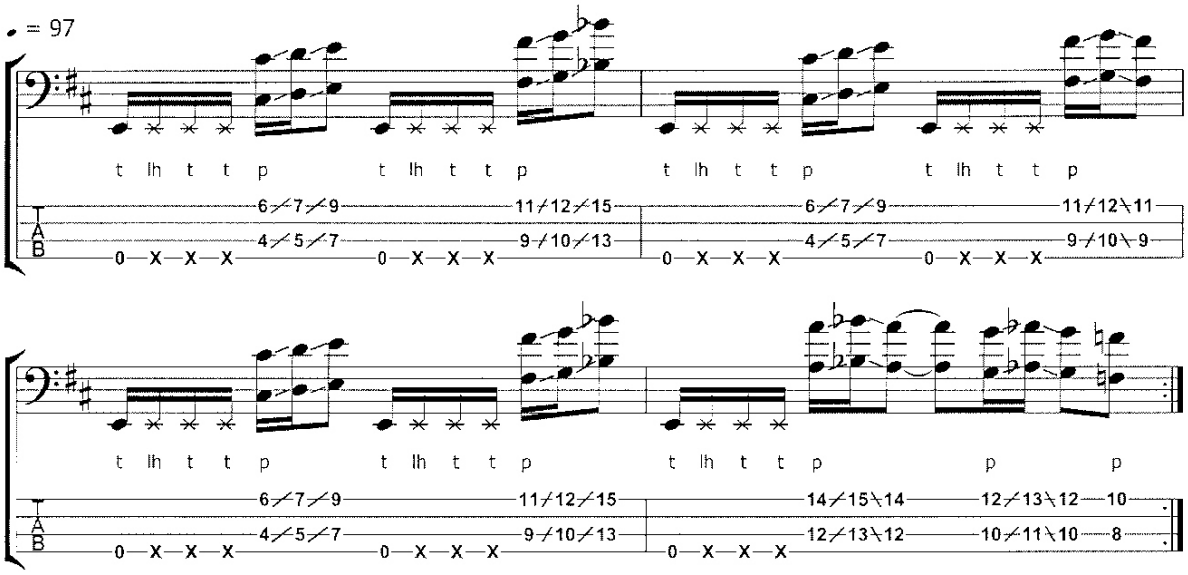
There may be times when you want to play two notes together that are not on adjacent strings. An example of this would be playing a root note and an octave, or a root note and a seventh. These intervals can be played by popping with the first and third fingers instead, as shown in the photograph opposite. As you'll be unaccustomed to popping with your third finger this will probably feel quite unnatural to begin with. Like any technique however, the more you work at it, the easier it will become.



Exercise 101

CD 1: Track 93

In this exercise our doublestops are octaves, which we side up a further two notes. You only need to pluck the first doublestop or each sliding figure, as indicated in the slap guides. Try playing the exercise without the octaves as well - you'll notice that including them thickens up the sound considerably.

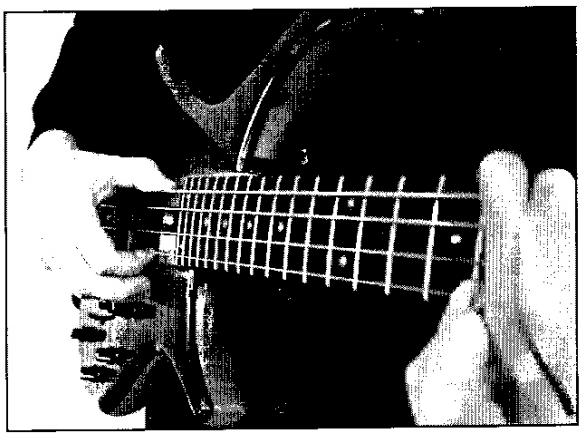


Sometimes the technique does make the song better, it can sound worse without it but you need to groove and play melodically as well.

PASCAL MULOT

We can take this idea a step further and play notes on the E and G strings together. To do so, we use the thumb and first finger to pluck both strings together as shown in the photograph below.

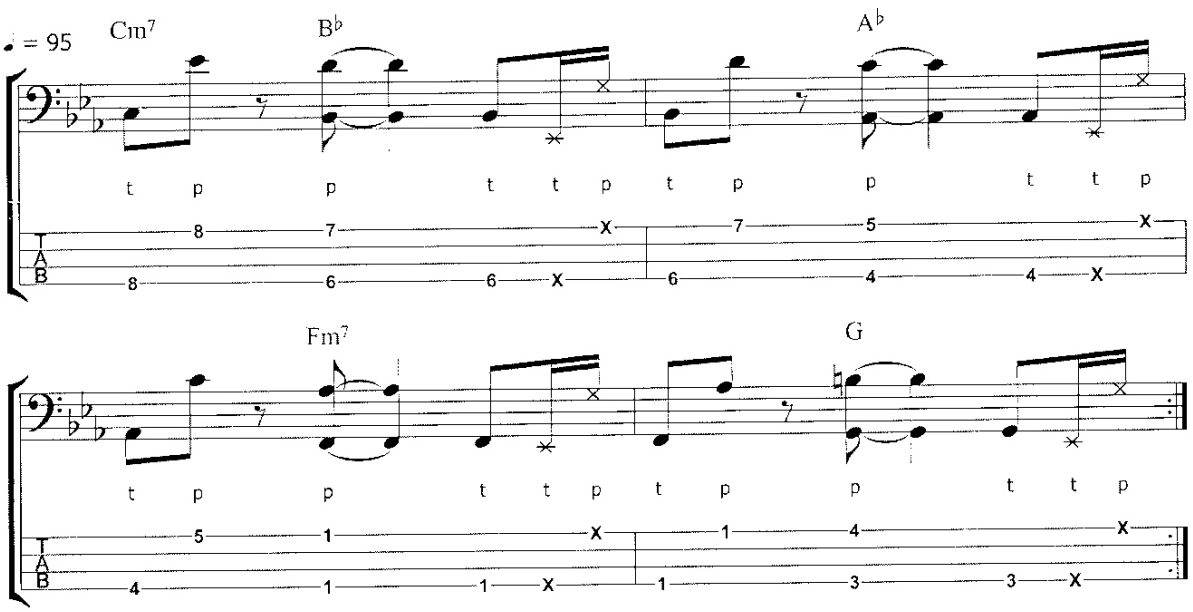
This technique can also be used to play octaves and sevenths if you prefer.



Exercise 102

CD 2: Track 1

This exercise is a slow, chordal groove. All of the doublestops are either major or minor tenths. The ghost notes on the last eighth note of each bar are there for percussive effect.

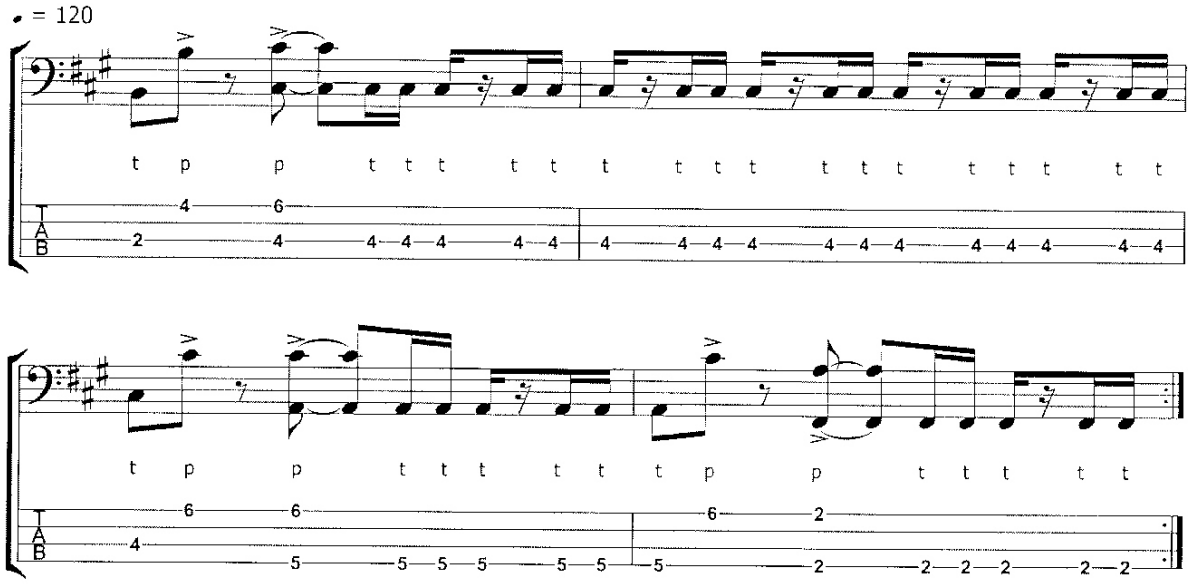


Chapter Summary

Now that we have examined all the different ways of playing doublestops on the standard 4-string bass, let's put them all to good use in some slap and pop lines.

Exercise 103

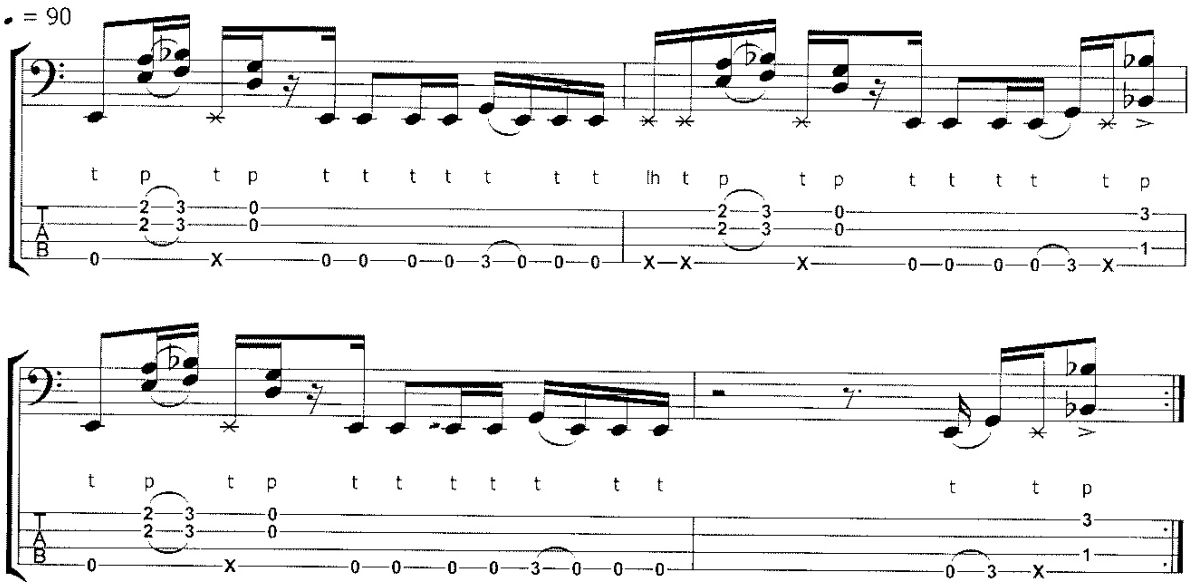
This riff uses the chugging rhythm that is a favourite rhythmic device of Mark King. Here we are popping octaves and tenths to reinforce the harmony. This one is quite fast, so take your time with it. Try to let the upper C♯'s ring where possible as this enhances the chordal effect.



Exercise 104

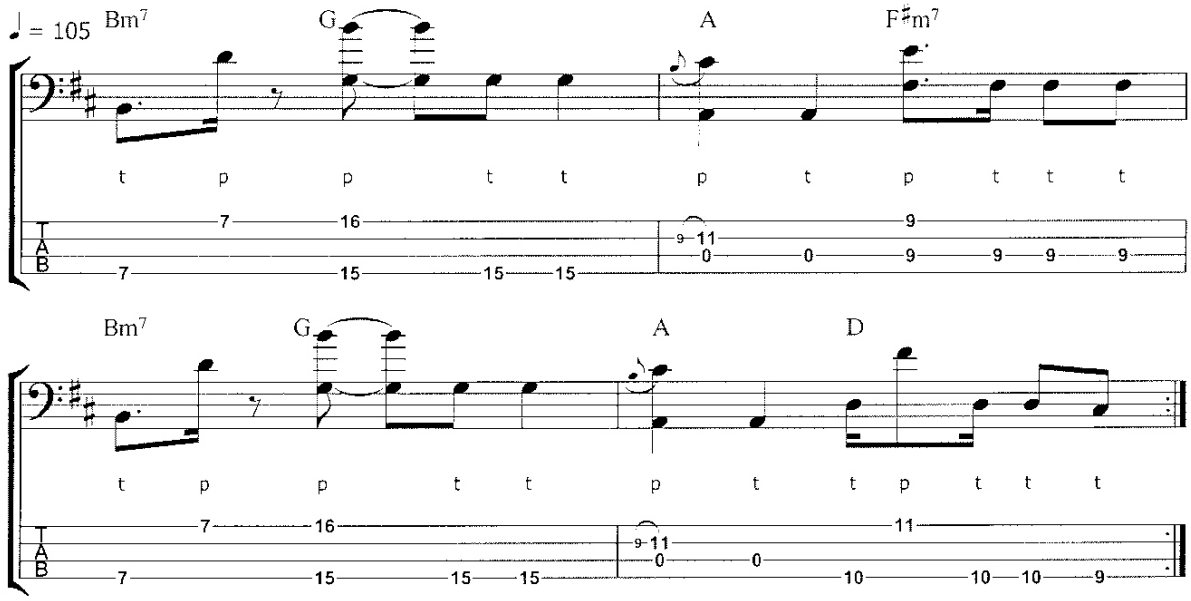
CD 2: Track 2

This is another slow rock riff that needs to be played quite aggressively. Most of the doublestops here are fourths, but there are a few octaves thrown in as well for good measure.



Exercise 105

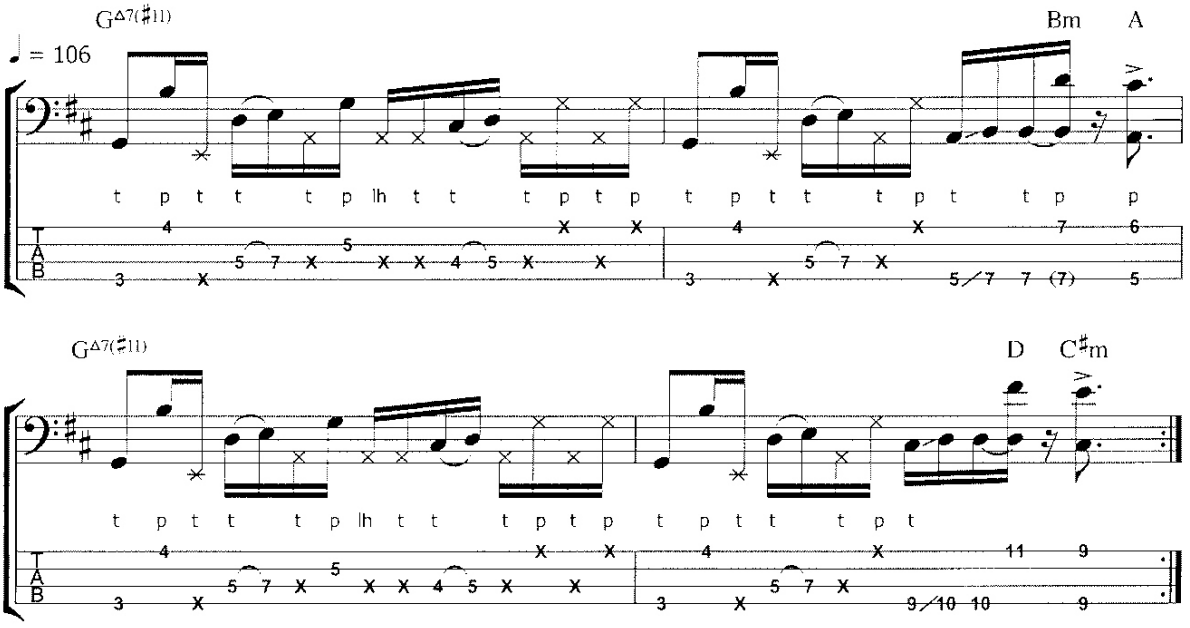
Here's a chordal line that uses a lot of tenths. There is also a seventh in the second bar (the F♯ and E). This can either be played with the first and third fingers or with the thumb and first finger.



Exercise 106

CD 2: Track 3

This exercise is a very hyperactive sixteenth note line that features some tenths in the second and fourth bars. These go by fairly quickly, so be sure to practise this one at a slower tempo to begin with.



Chapter 10

Double Popping

When it comes to popping notes, most players will favour either their first or second finger. It's nevertheless an excellent idea to be able to use either, and the previous chapter - which covered doublestops - should have afforded you ample opportunity to work on this. We're going to take this a step further now and look at using both the first and second fingers to pop notes, but this time one after the other rather than together. The combination of thumb slaps and first and second finger pops makes for another excellent way to play triplets, as you will discover from many of the following exercises. These can then be used as rhythmic figures that can add spice to your slap lines.

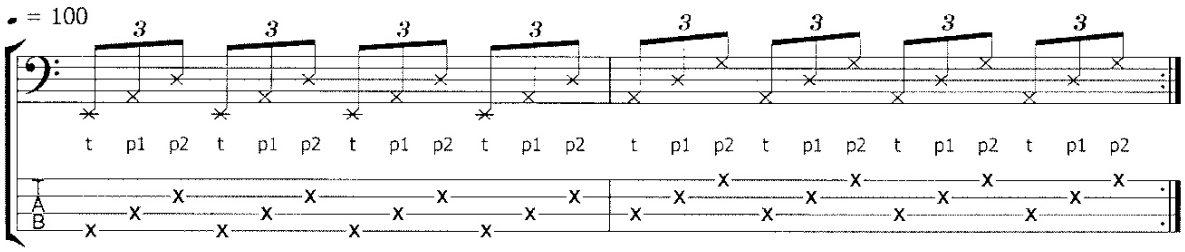
TIP! For some great examples of some bass grooves that feature double popping, I recommend checking out the following tracks:

1. 'Count Zero' - Stuart Hamm
2. 'Liquid' - Ray Riendeau
3. 'The Sinister Minister' - Béla Fleck & The Flecktones
4. 'Boogie On Reggae Woman' - Marcus Miller
5. 'Run For Cover' - Marcus Miller

Pops will be notated in the slap guides with the symbols p1 and p2 to indicate which finger is to be used. A single letter p indicates that either finger will do.

Exercise 107

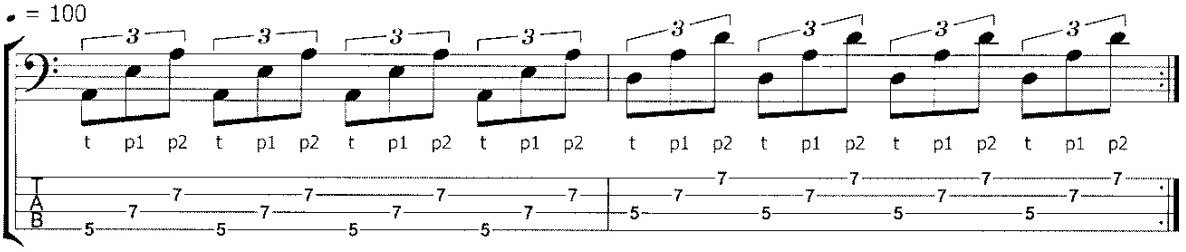
In this exercise we are going to stick to ghost notes and play eighth note triplets with the thumb and first and second finger pops. In the first bar you will be slapping the E string, then popping the A and D strings. In the second bar, you will be slapping the A string and popping the D and G strings. Popping with one finger after the other may feel a little unusual at first so you may need to work on this for a while in order to get it to sound smooth and natural. I strongly advise mastering this exercise before moving on to the next.



Exercise 108

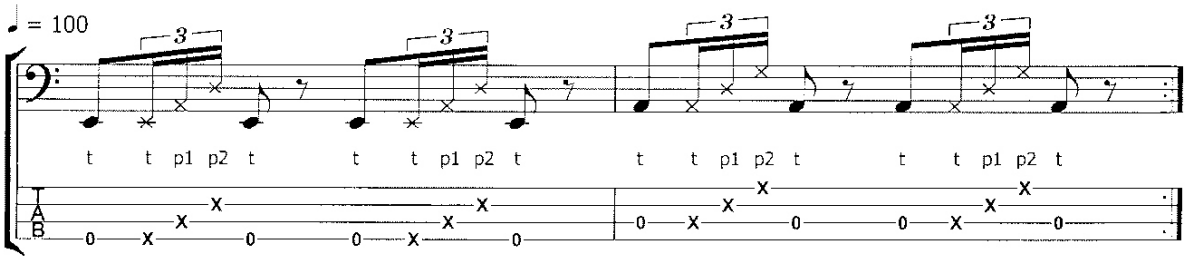
CD 2: Track 4

Lets now try this with pitched notes. This triplet figure is quite tough to play repeatedly, and you'll find that it is actually easier within the context of some of the exercises. Nevertheless you should once again take the time to master this exercise before moving on.



Exercise 109

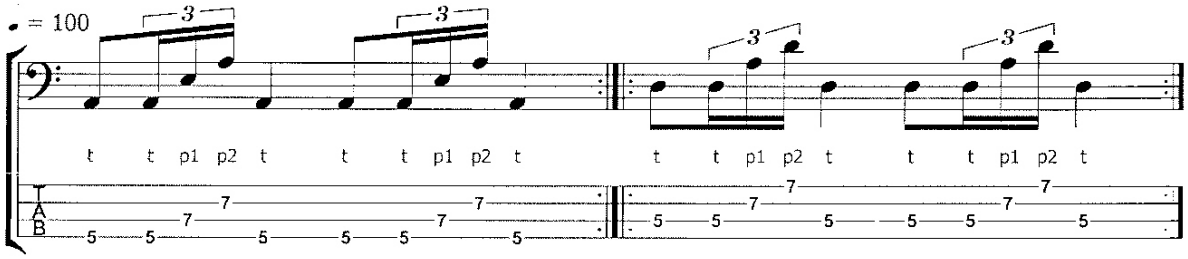
You also need to be able to play these figures as sixteenth note triplets. This exercise should get you started. You may well find them easier now that they are faster, but remember it is valuable to be able to play them slowly as well.



Exercise 110

CD 2: Track 5

Lets now try this with pitched notes.



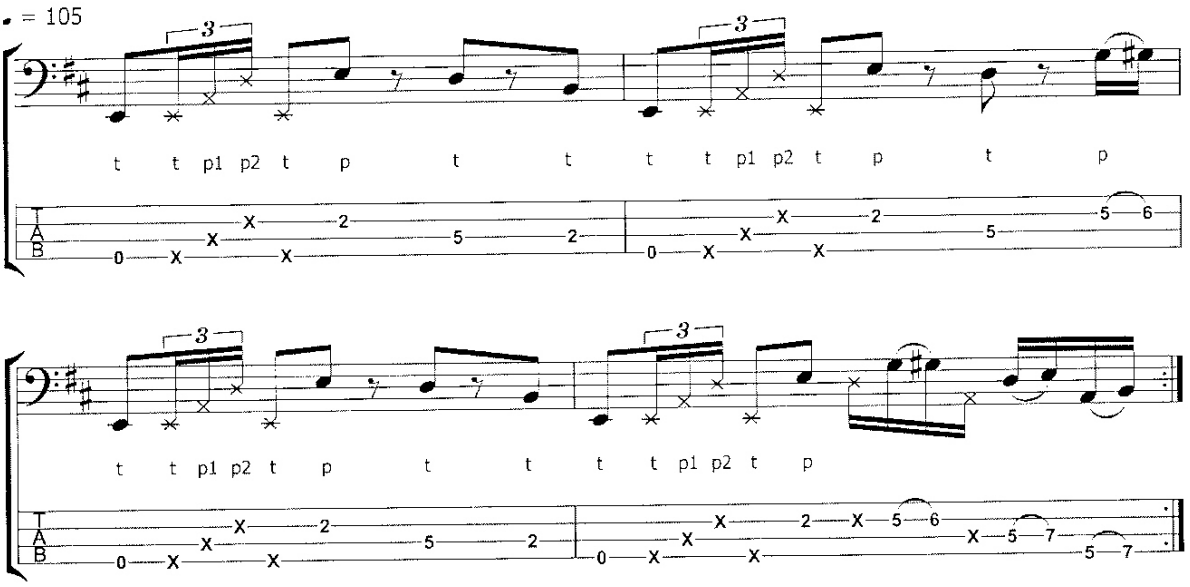
Adam Nitti

Photo courtesy of Adam Nitti

Exercise 111

CD 2: Track 6

Lets add the double pop into a simple line now. This is one with a double pop on the first beat of each bar, just to get you started.



Chapter Summary

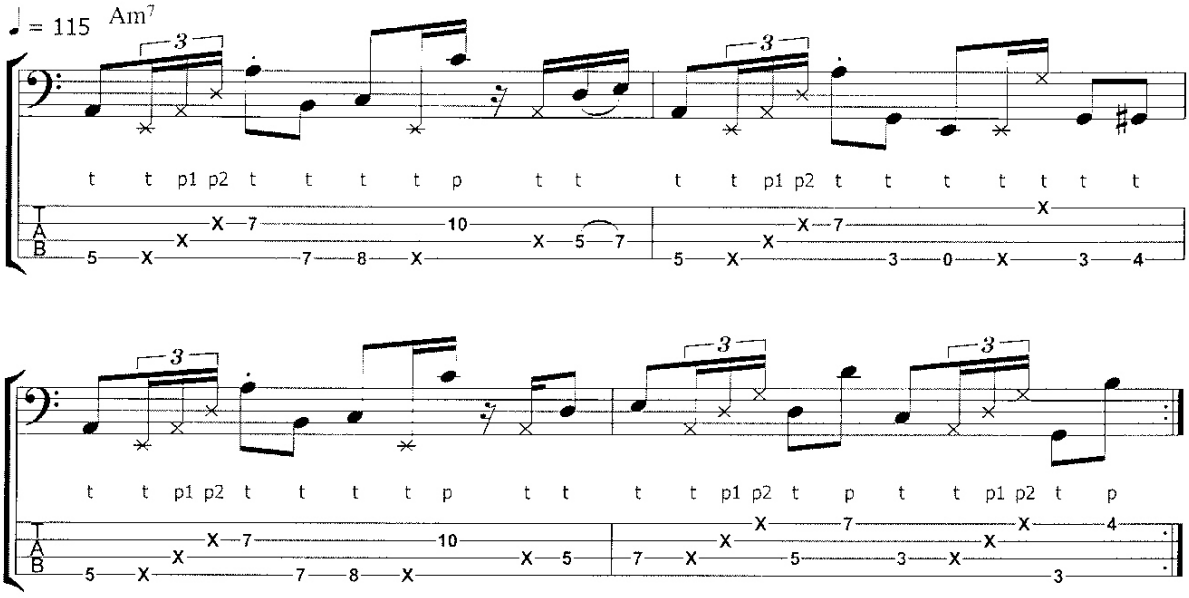
In this chapter we have examined another technique which, while not crucial to a bass players' technical arsenal, can be helpful for adding spice to slap and pop grooves. In addition to what you have learnt here, I strongly recommend that you study the players and tracks mentioned at the beginning of the chapter - hearing devices such as this in action is essential to successfully implementing them yourself.

We'll now put what we have learnt to work in the Exercise Area.

Exercise 112

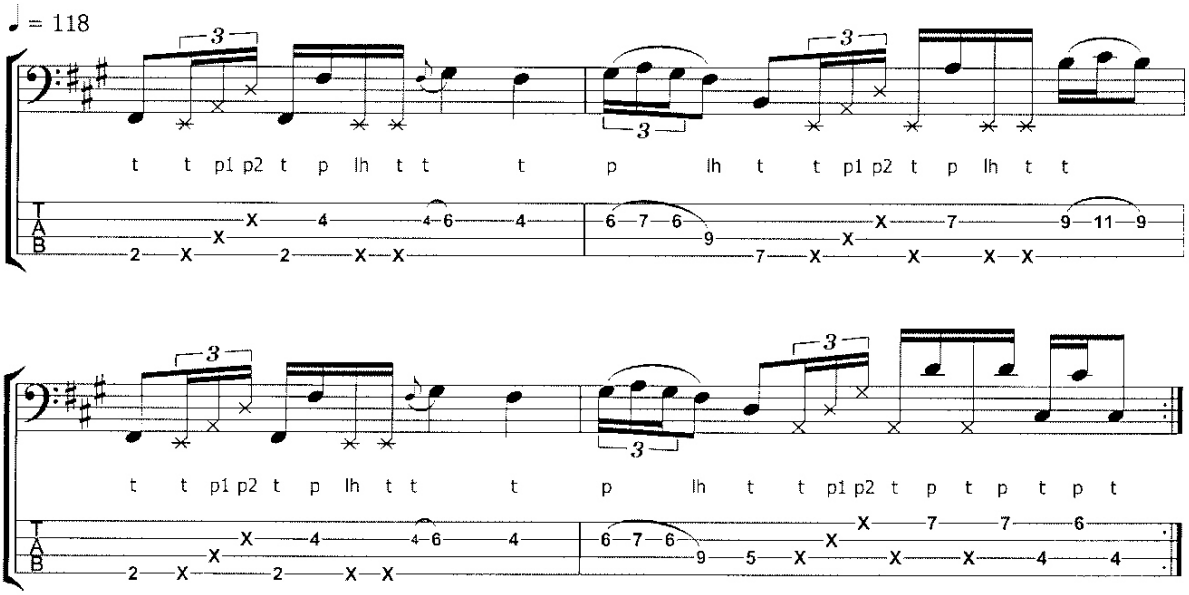
CD 2: Track 7

This funk line has a classic ascending figure in the first and third bars (A, B, C) and plenty of double popping, particularly in the final bar.



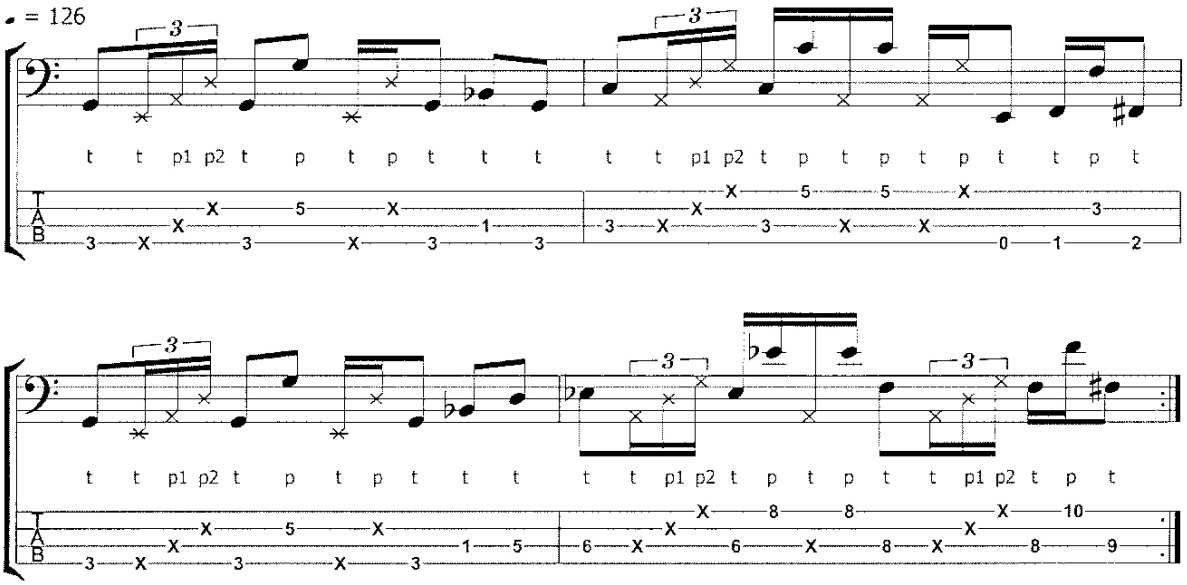
Exercise 113

As well as plenty of double popping, this exercise features a legato figure on the first beat of bars 2 and 4. Only the first note of this figure is played with the right hand, the remaining notes are performed as a hammer-on, a pull-off and a pitched left hand slap. We will take a closer look at pitched left hand slaps later in the book, but for now all you need to know is that the technique for playing remains the same as if you were playing ghost notes.



Exercise 114

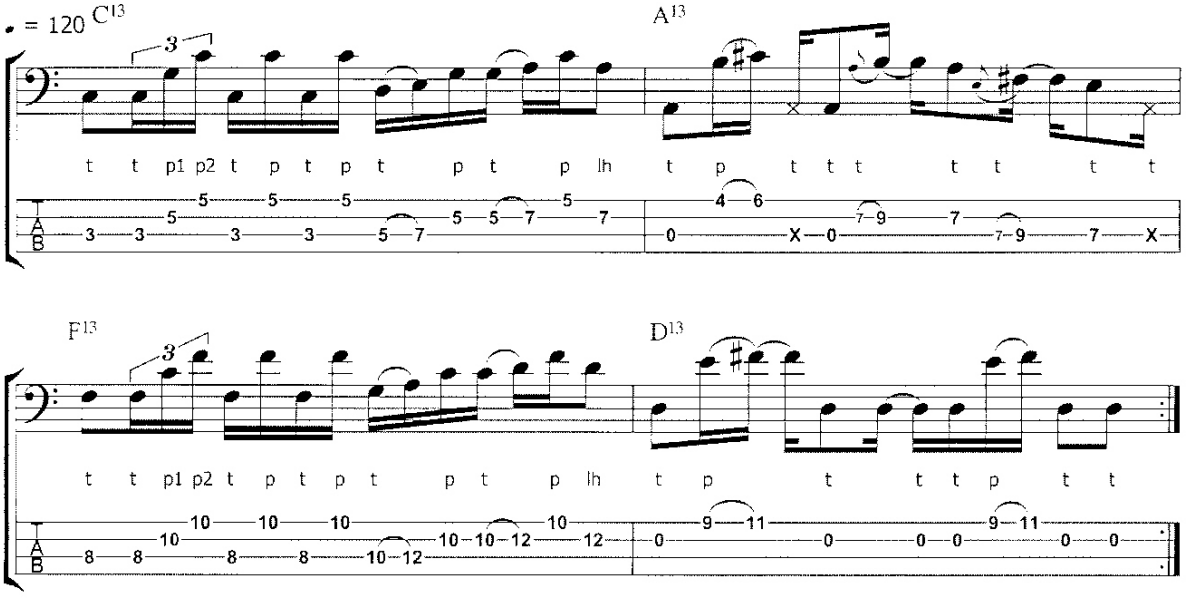
This line has a fast tempo so I'd advise practising it slowly to begin with. In the second bar we once again have sixteenth note slap and pop figures that require the thumb to bounce in between the popped notes.



Exercise 115

CD 2: Track 8

This exercise is a fast and frantic line that works over the chord changes to the Jaco Pastorius/Weather Report classic 'Teen Town'. Pay close attention to the figure on beat three of bars 1 and 3: after the hammer-on you pop a note on the D string, then bring your thumb in to slap the same note for the start of the next hammer-on. This can take a little getting used to, so take your time with it. The rhythmic figures in bar 2 are tricky, so listen closely to the CD. Note the use of tenths both here and in bar 4 - as we have already learnt, they allow us to make our bass parts more harmonically interesting.



Chapter 11

Strumming

There are certain techniques that don't necessarily come under the banner of 'slap bass,' but which are worth discussing in this volume since incorporating them can make for interesting results. Strumming is one such technique, and has been used by many of the greatest slap players to add extra variety to a line. The finest example of this is of course Stanley Clarke's bass anthem 'School Days.' This track, with its strummed power chord intro has become Clarke's signature tune and has been often imitated. You see a list of further examples in the box opposite, and I recommend listening to as many of them as possible. You should also check out the playing of Colin Hodgekinson, the bass player with jazz/rock trio Backdoor who recorded several albums in the seventies. Although not strictly a slap player, Colin is an extremely skilled bassist who combines strumming with many other techniques in a rather unique style.

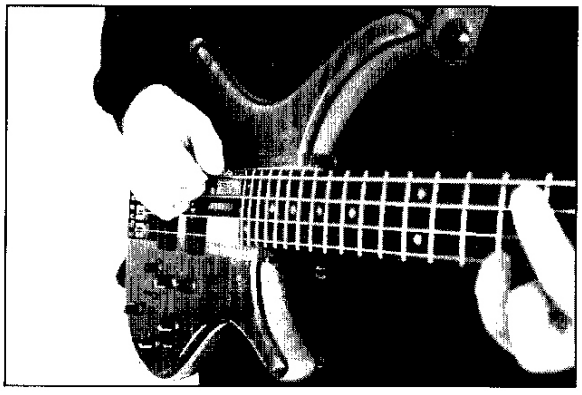
TIP! For some great examples of some bass grooves that feature strumming, I recommend checking out the following tracks:

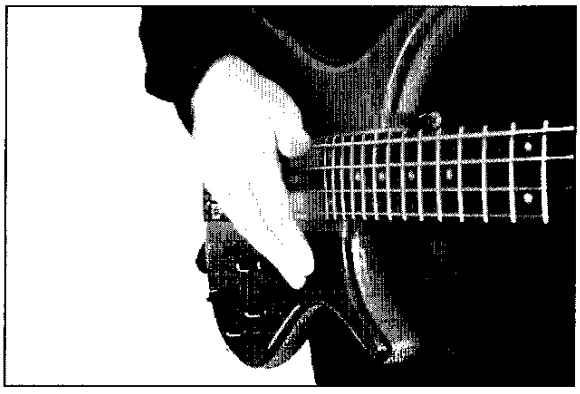
1. 'School Days' - Stanley Clarke
2. 'Tommy The Cat' - Primus
3. 'Don't Forget Me' - Red Hot Chili Peppers
4. 'More Luv' - Victor Wooten
5. 'Over There (Live)' - Level 42

Upstrokes and Downstrokes

In comparison to some of the techniques in this book, strumming is a relatively simple one to master. Everyone has seen a guitar being strummed, and the technique is pretty much exactly the same when applied to the bass. The trick is to make sure that you are striking the strings with your fingernails - this gives the notes the hard-edged attack that is required.

In order to strum the bass effectively, you need to be adept at playing upstrokes as well as downstrokes with your fingers. This is illustrated in the photographs below. In the first photograph you can see the hand positioned over the strings with the fingers retracted, ready to strum the strings. In the second, you can see the fingers extended, having strummed the strings, and now ready to strum them again on the upstroke.





Let's now take a look at some simple strumming exercises.

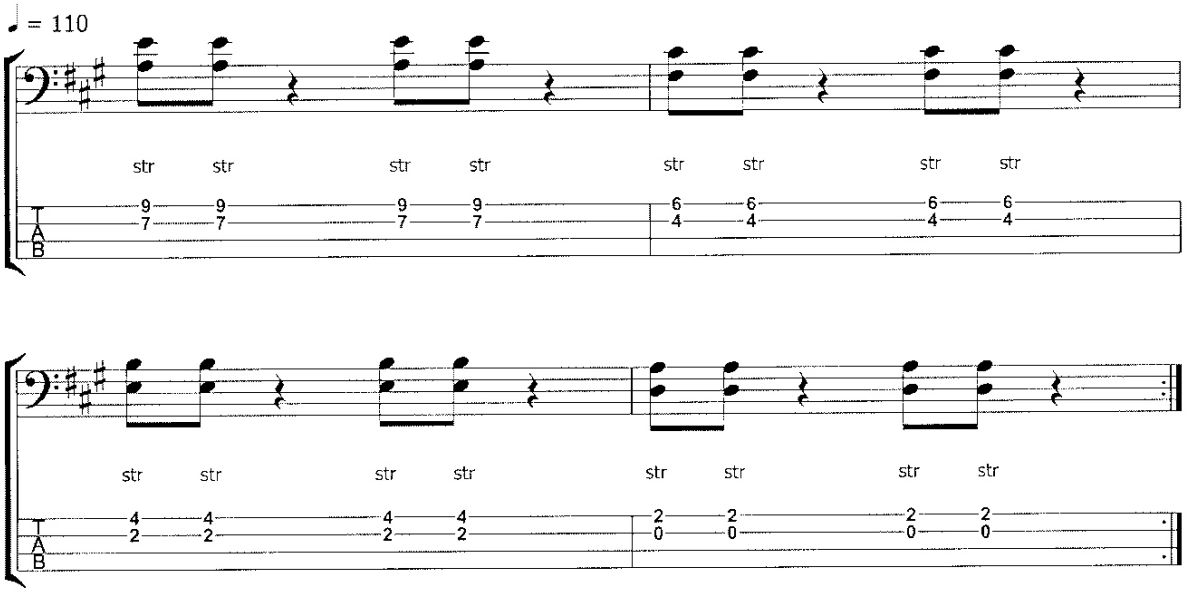
I think, with the bass in general, I have always tried to get as many different sounds out of it as possible. Strumming is one of the things that you can do on a bass to make it sound different - and not just different, but fuller.

STANLEY CLARKE

Exercise 116

CD 2: Track 9

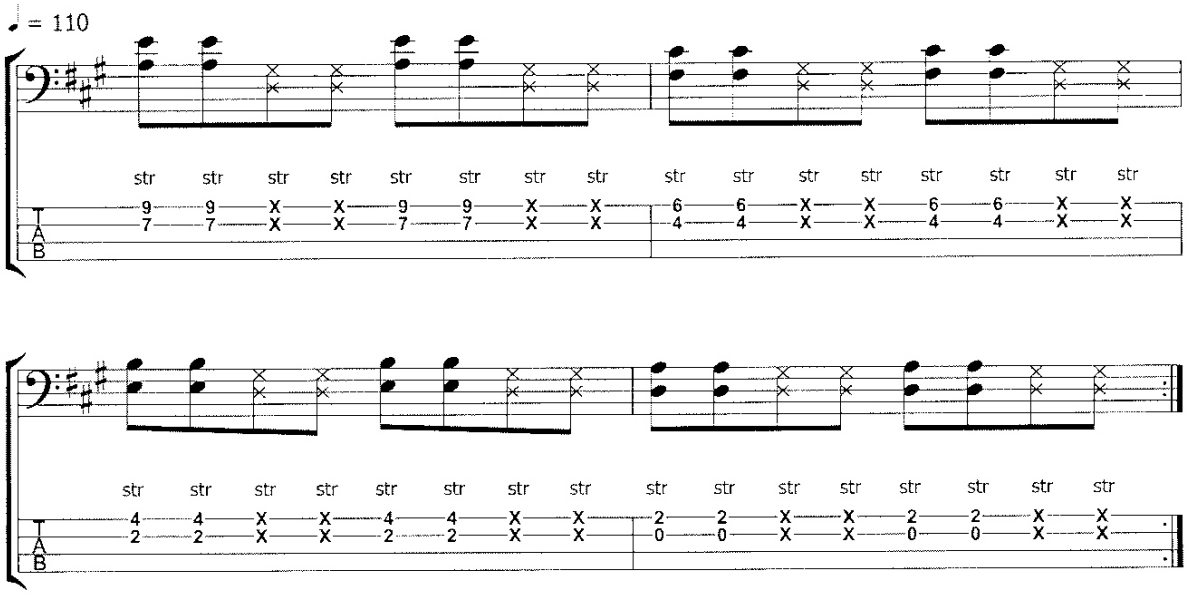
In this exercise you have to strum upwards and downwards on the first and second eighth notes of the first and third beats. The goal here is to make both your down and upstrokes even in volume.



Exercise 117

CD 2: Track 10

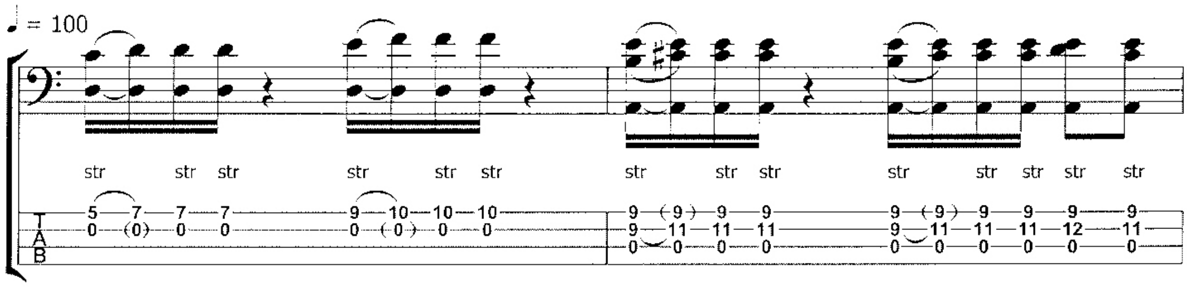
Ghost notes work very well with the strumming technique. This exercise is the same as the previous one except that I have filled in the rests with strummed ghost notes. You should play this exercise with a consistent down/up motion, starting with a downstroke.

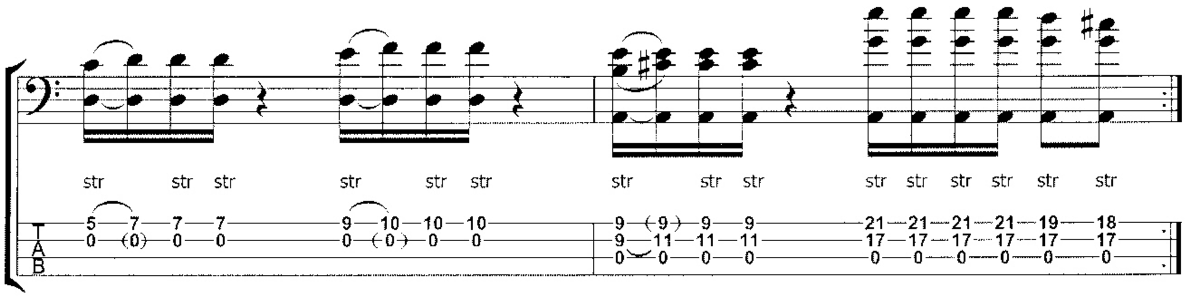


Exercise 118

CD 2: Track 11

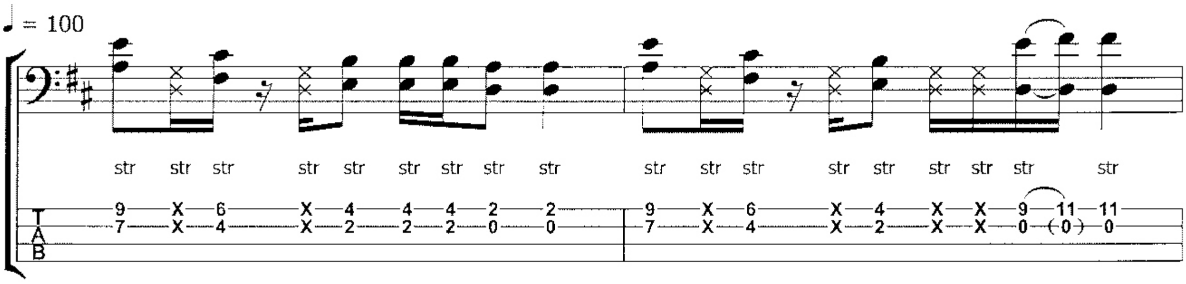
You'll recall that we looked at tenths back in Chapter 7. Tenths, in conjunction with open strings are frequently used in strumming. This exercise features some of the major and minor tenths that are playable with the open strings on a 4-string bass. We also looked at these back in Chapter 7.

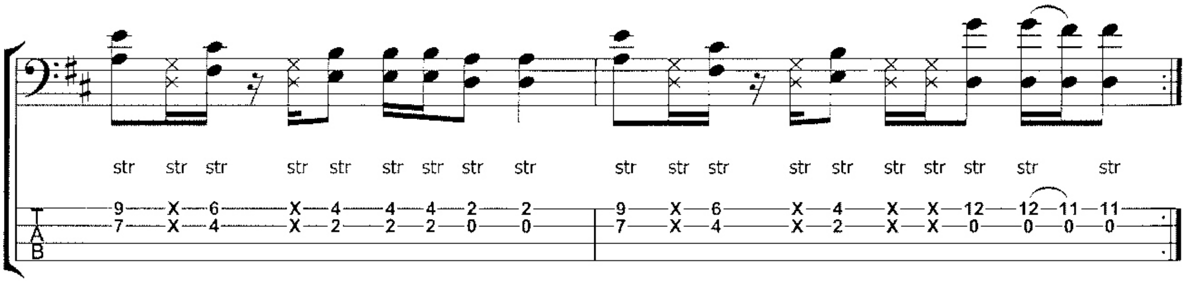




Exercise 119

Power chords, the guitarists' favourite, are also very popular. Here's an exercise that is reminiscent of Stanley Clarke's classic track 'School Days.' This one consists of power chords, with a few tenths thrown in for good measure.



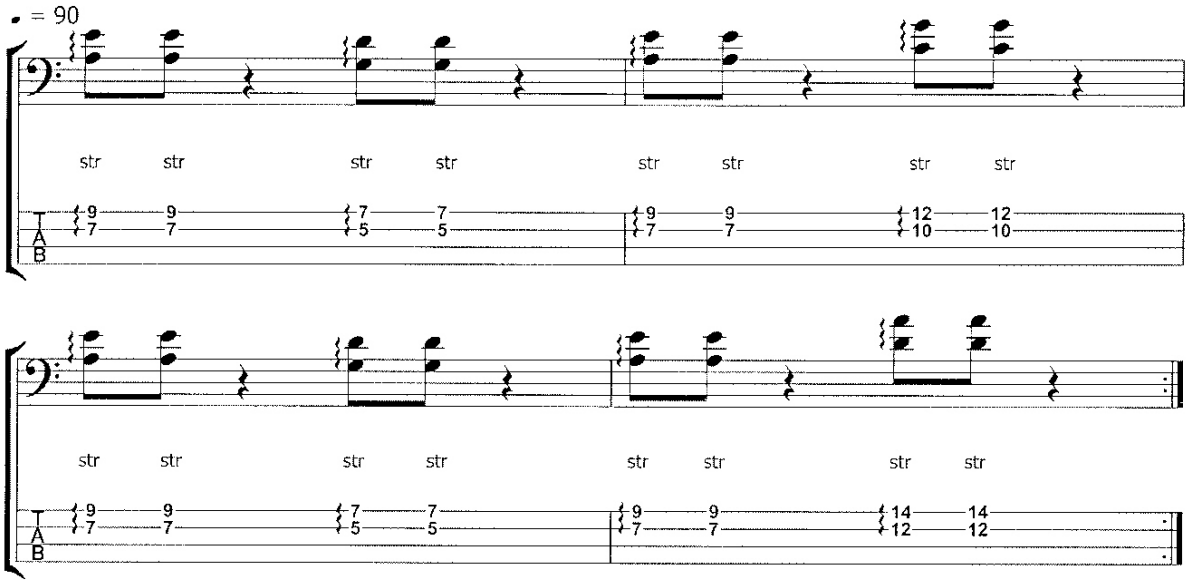


Some players have adapted the strumming technique by flicking their fingers downwards one after the other in quick succession. This is a classical guitar technique and works rather well on the bass too. Rather than flicking all the fingers downwards at once you simply stagger the action slightly, leading with the little finger. This adds rhythmic flavour to the line. In the following exercises this technique has been notated using the following symbol next to the appropriate notes:

Exercise 120

CD 2: Track 12

This exercise is very simple and has been recorded at a slow tempo so that you can hear how this technique should sound.

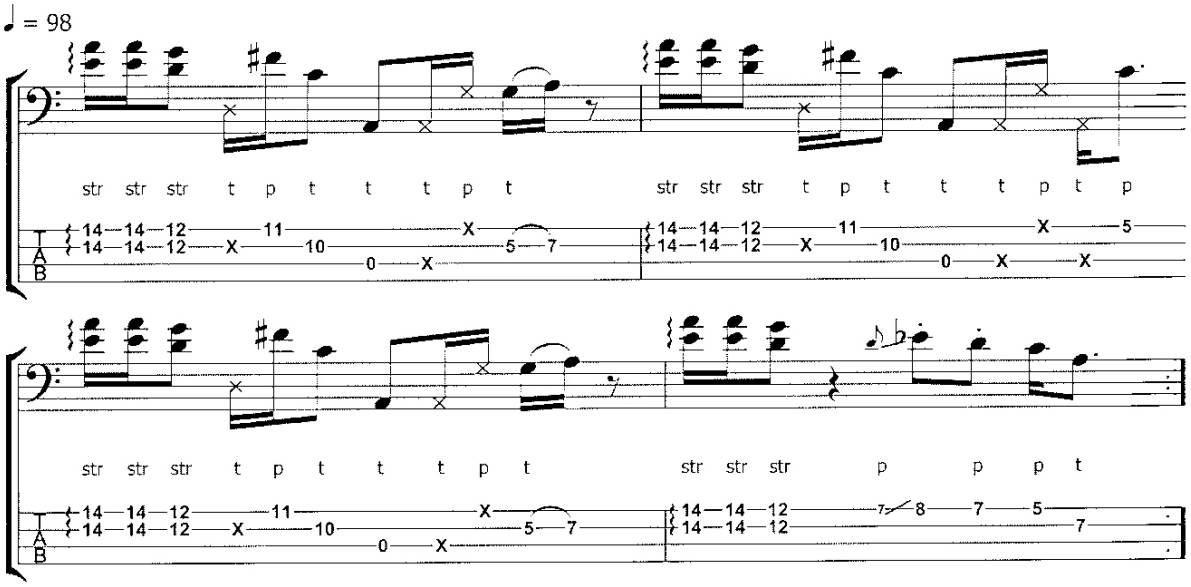


I play a lot of chords. I strum a kind of claw-hammer banjo style. The first person I saw strumming chords on the bass was Stanley Clarke, so I got that idea from him. **LES CLAYPOOL**

Exercise 121

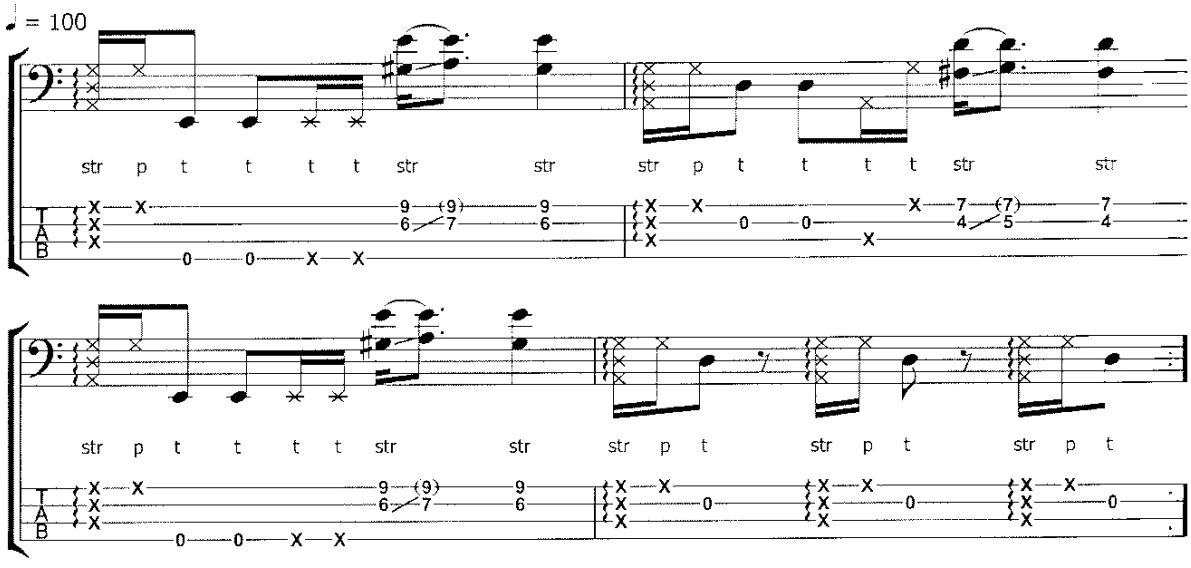
CD 2: Track 13

This exercise features the 'flicking' technique in every bar. Practise this one slowly - it should help you become adept at incorporating the flicking technique into your slap playing.



Exercise 122

This technique can also be used to play ghost notes. Here it is used as a rhythmic device to add interest to the line.



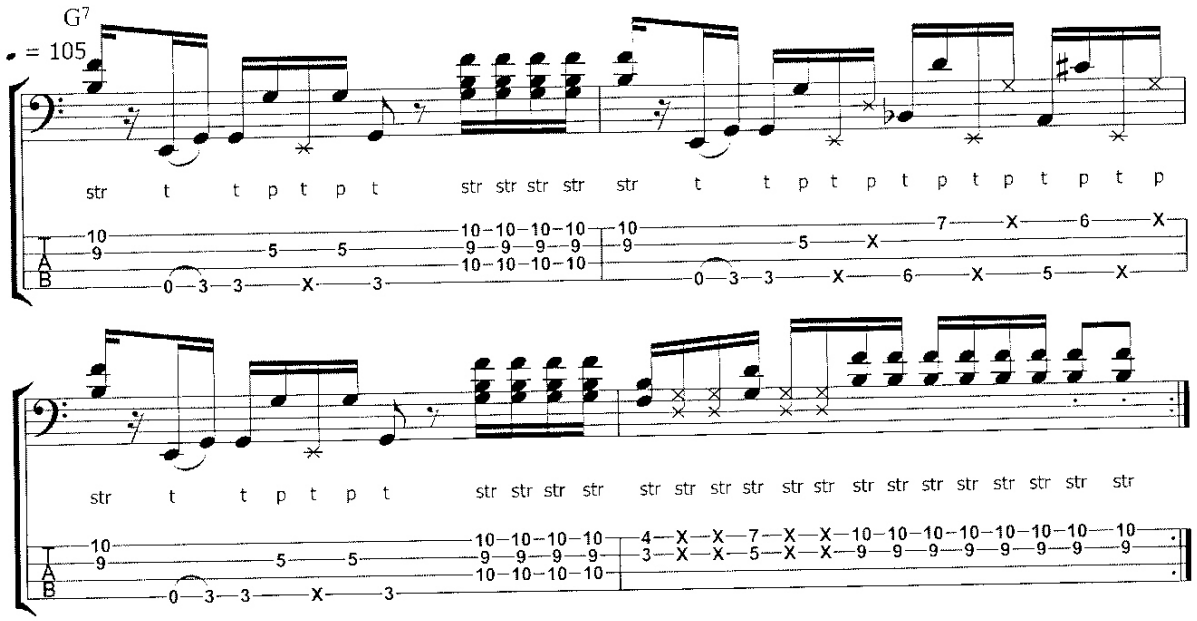
Chapter Summary

In this chapter we've covered another tool that can add spice to your slap and pop lines. The next few exercises will give you the chance you put this new technique to use.

Exercise 123

CD 2: Track 14

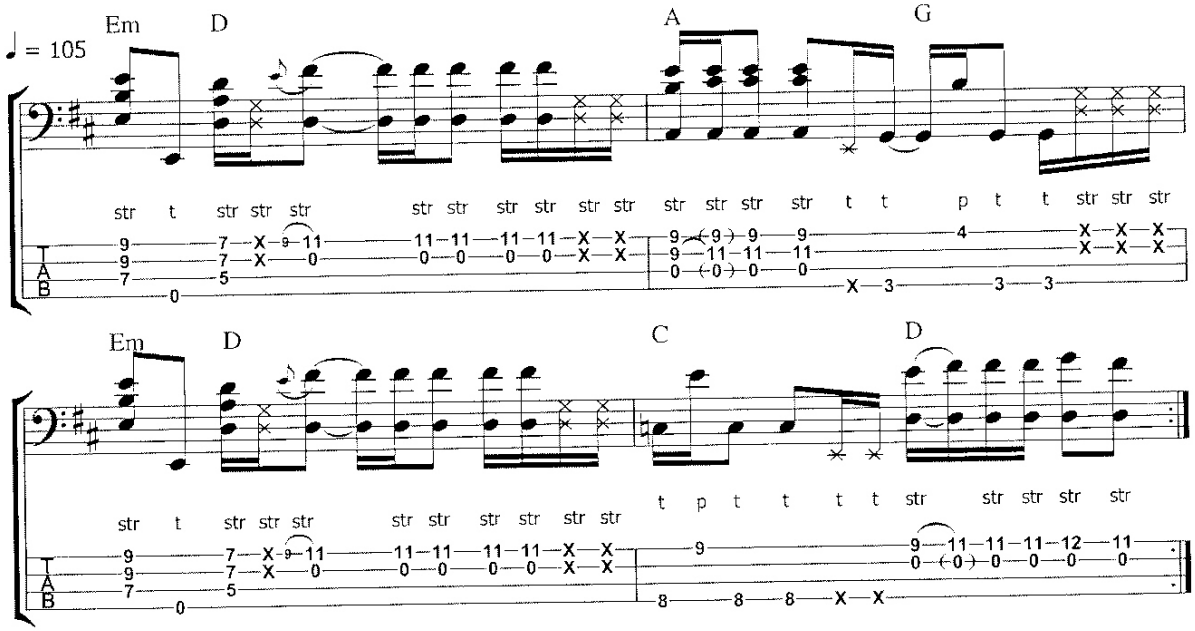
This exercise is a funk line in G that features a lot of strumming. Notice that the doublestops on the first beat of the bar are the classic combination of third and seventh, as covered back in Chapter 9. Tenths are used in the second bar rather than octaves to add extra harmonic variety.



Exercise 124

CD 2: Track 15

This exercise features several tenths played with open strings. Strummed ghost notes have been added to fill in the rhythms. The strummed chord in bar 2 is played by fretting the B and E at the ninth fret - I recommend barring them with the first finger, then hammering-on the C♯ from the B as you strum.

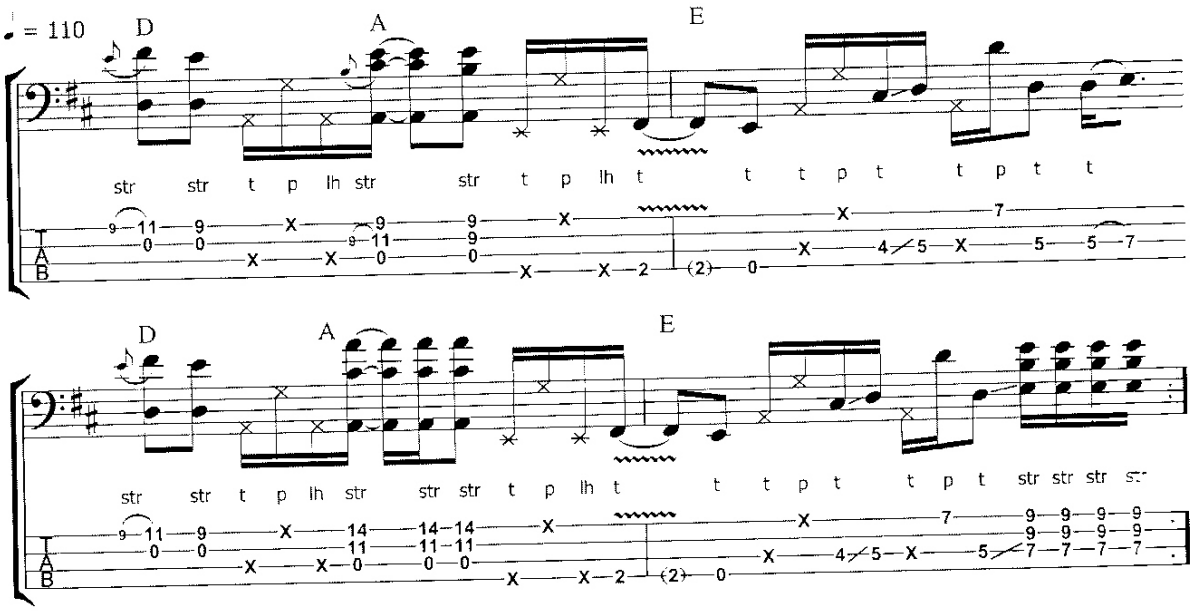


Chapter 11 - Exercise Area

Exercise 125

CD 2: Track 16

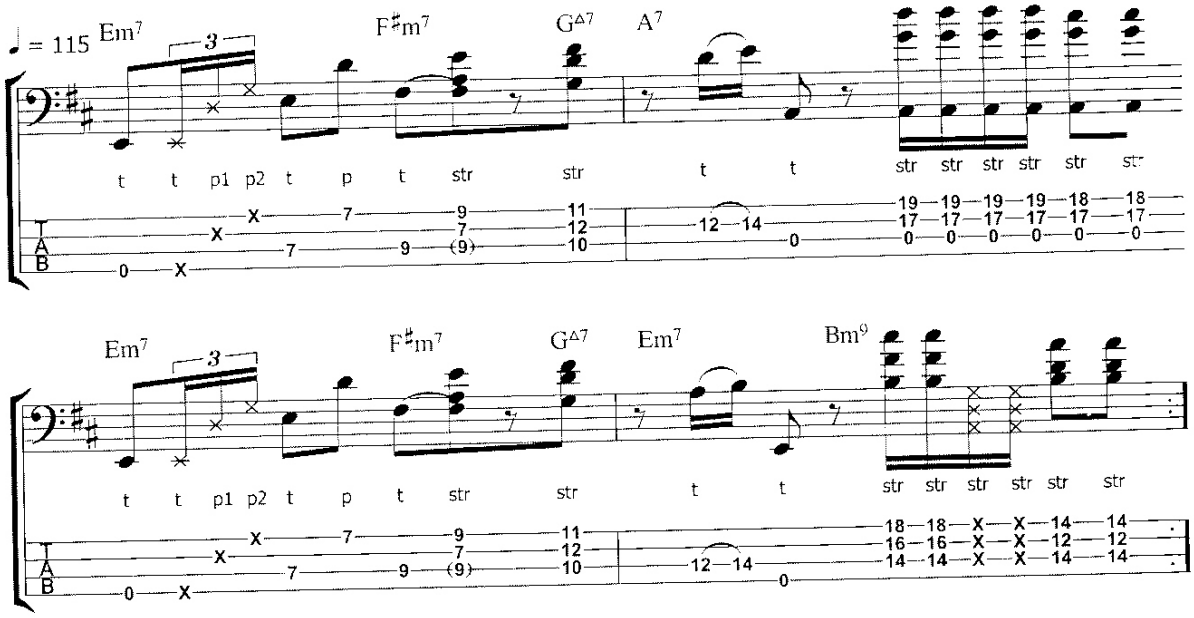
This is another line that features many open string tenths. Open keys such as E, A and D are excellent for strumming because many of the best sounding chords are easily playable.



Exercise 126

CD 2: Track 17

This exercise is quite tricky because of some awkward chord shapes and a quick tempo. You'll also need to be familiar with the double popping technique in order to execute the triplet figures on the first beat of bars 1 and 3.



Section 2

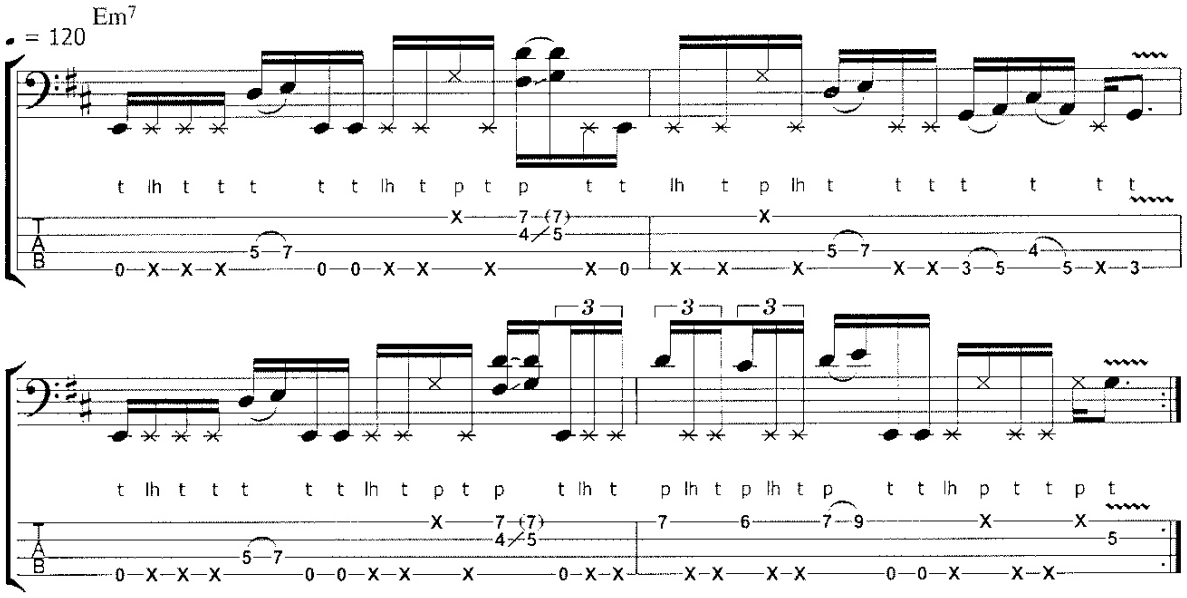
Intermediate Level Exercise Area

If you have worked through the book from the start you will by now have covered just about everything you need to play a large variety of slap and pop lines. You will also have learnt a whole host of more complex techniques such as double popping, strumming, and how to use doublestops. It's time now to put what you have learnt to the test, with a selection of more complex slap lines. Each of these lines focuses on one or more of the techniques covered in this section of the book - if you find them difficult, be sure to go back and look over the relevant chapter again.

Exercise 127

CD 2: Track 18

This exercise is a sixteenth note based groove in E minor, featuring left hand slaps, doublestops and machine gun triplets! There is a lot of information to absorb here, so practise this one slowly, and keep a close eye on the slap guides for the correct left and right hand coordination.

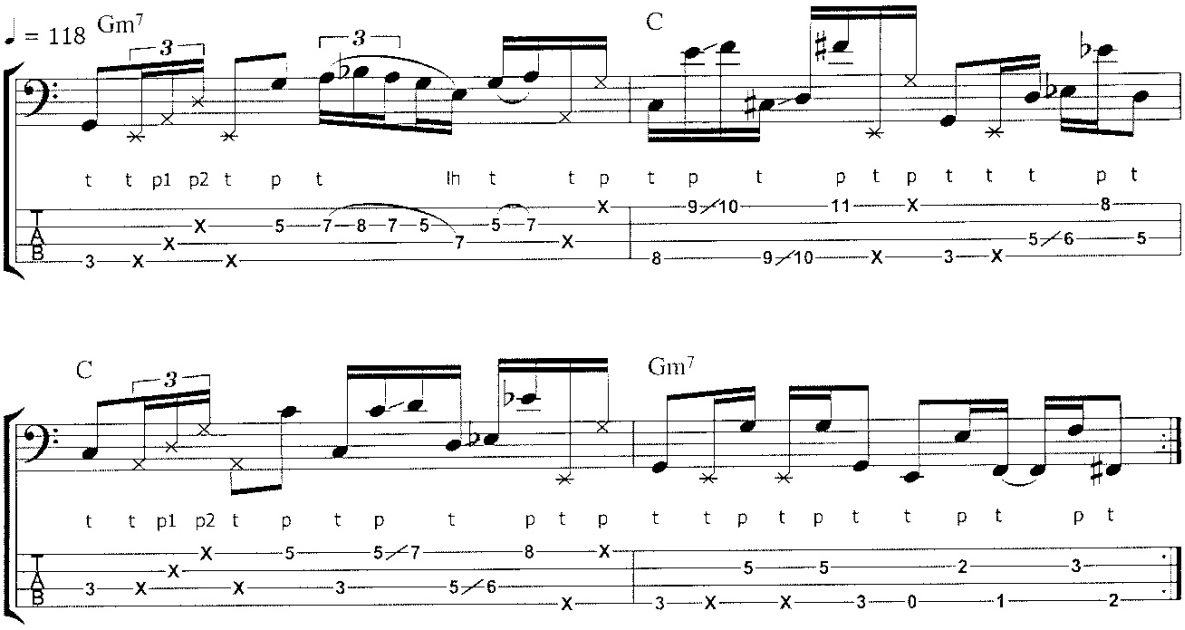


Intermediate Level Exercise Area

Exercise 128

CD 2: Track 19

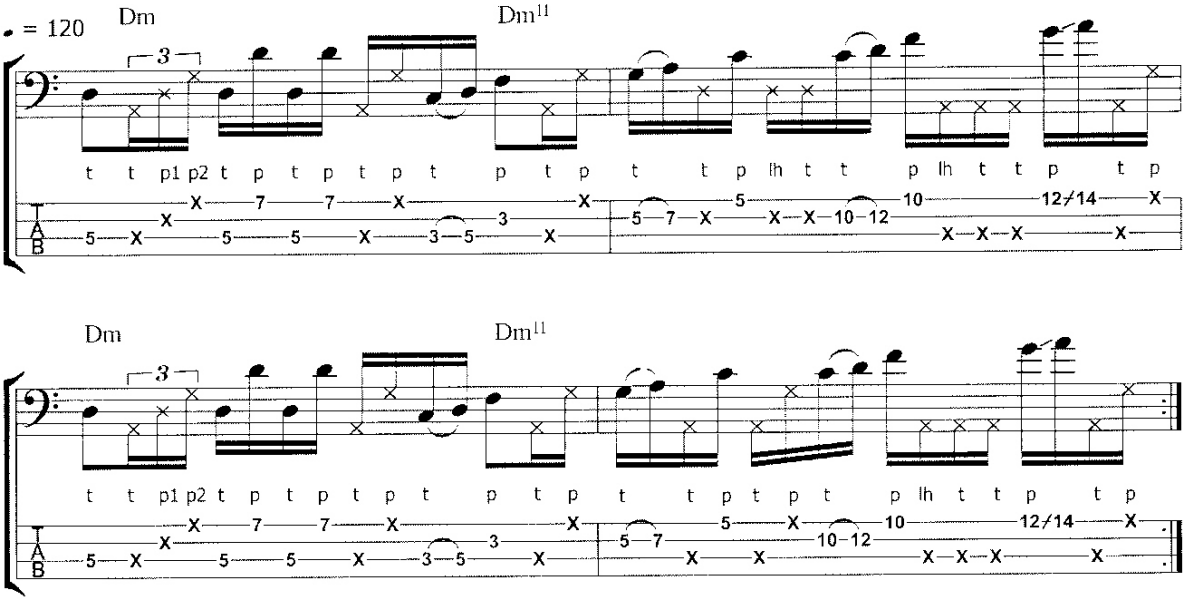
This complex exercise features the double popping technique in the first and third bars. The legato figure on the third beat of bar 1 is quite tricky - you only slap once, on the D string, and the rest of the notes are performed as hammer-ons, pull-offs and a pitched left hand slap. Bar 2 contains sliding tenths, which we looked at back in Exercise 83. Try to let the lower notes ring under the upper ones to enhance the chordal effect.



Exercise 129

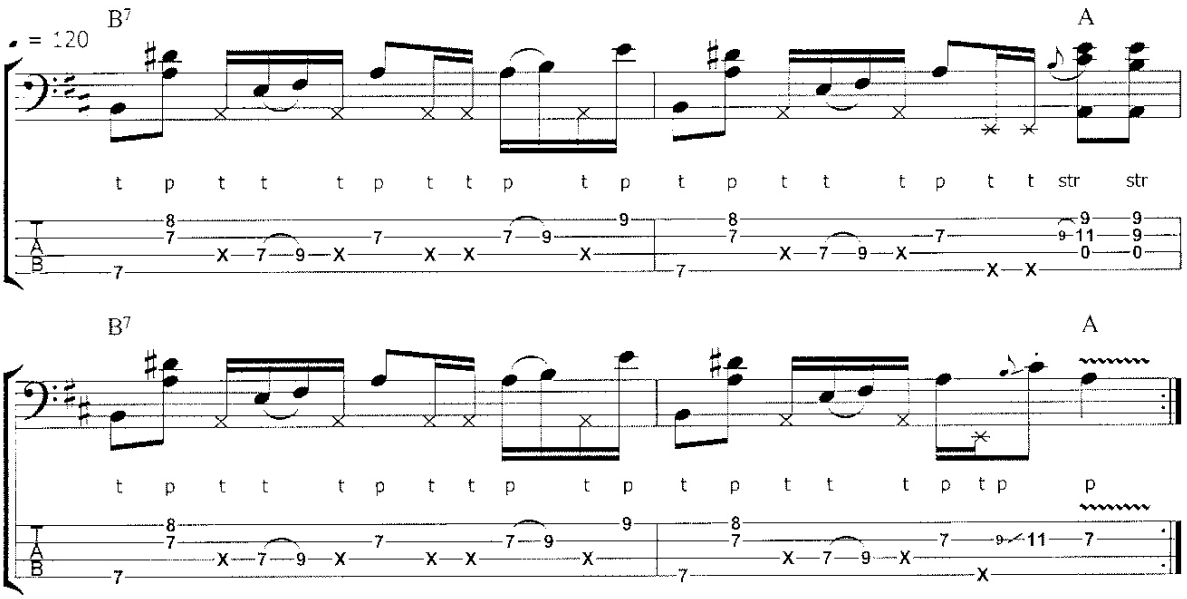
CD 2: Track 20

This hyperactive line features double popping in the context of a busy sixteenth note groove that uses notes from the D minor pentatonic scale. Be sure to transpose licks like these to all the other keys, so that you can throw them into your slap lines whenever you want, whatever key you are in.



Exercise 130

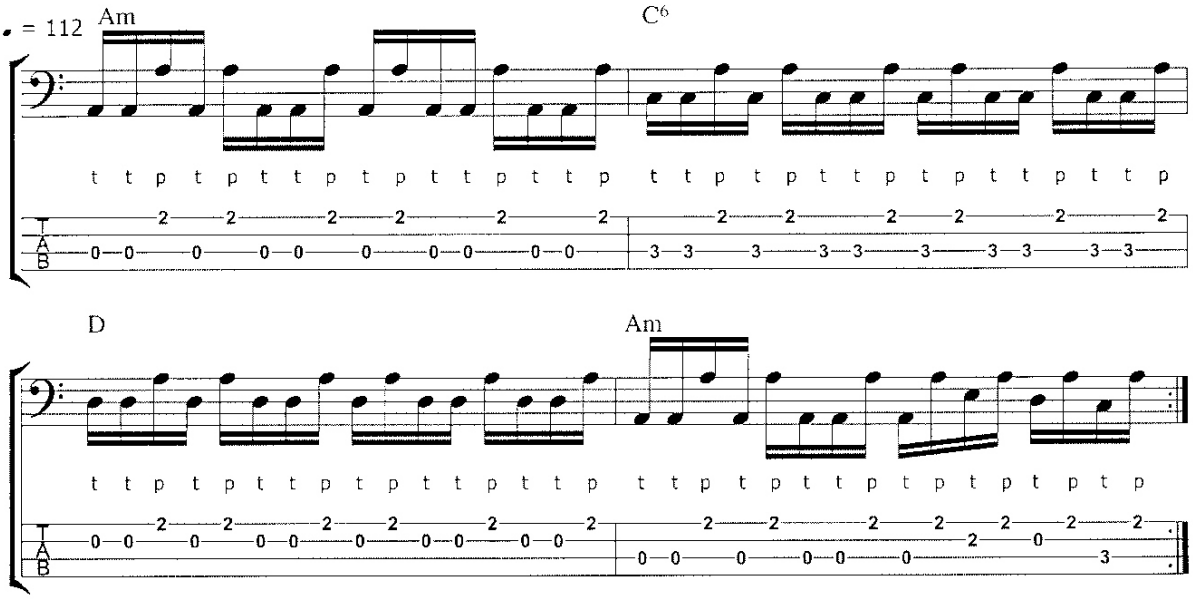
This exercise features doublestops, with some strumming thrown in for good measure. Note that the doublestop on the first beat of each bar is the classic funk doublestop - root, seventh and third, or in this case tenth. The strumming part in bar 2 is played by barring across the ninth fret at on the D and G strings and hammering-on the C♯ on the D string.



Exercise 131

CD 2: Track 21

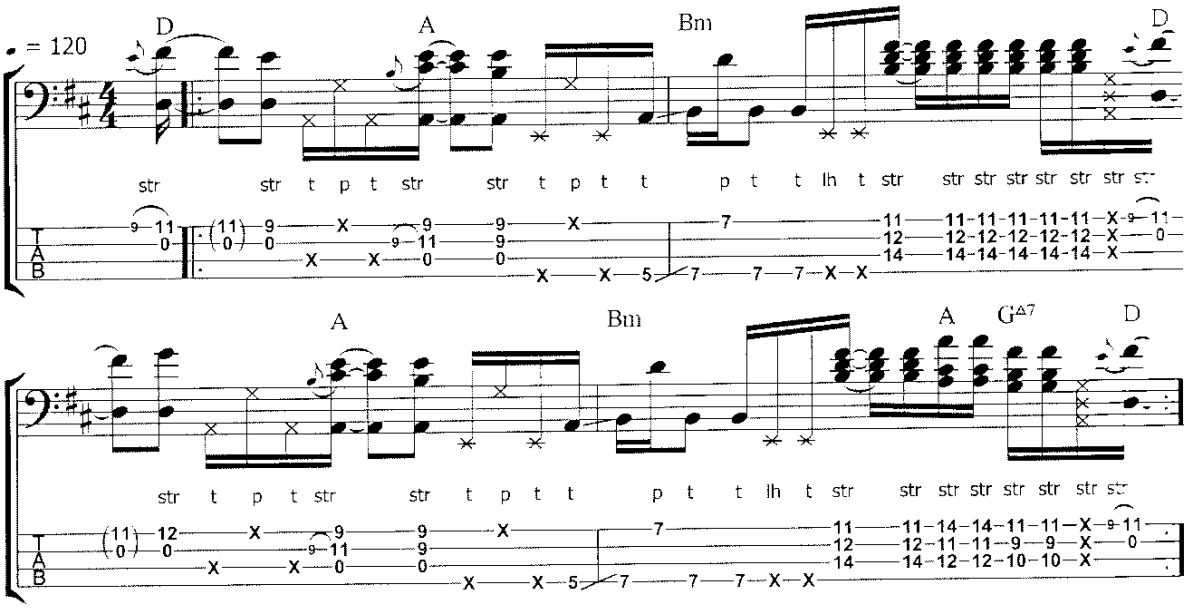
This is a Stuart Hamm style sixteenth note slap line. You can hear this technique in use on the track 'Count Zero' from his *Kings Of Sleep* album. I recommend keeping the second finger on the A on the G string throughout. In the second bar you can then use your third finger to fret the C. In the final bar, the descending bass part can be quite tricky unless you are using the correct fingering; with the second finger remaining on the popped A, you should fret the E on the D string with your first finger, and the C on the A string with your third finger.



Intermediate Level Exercise Area

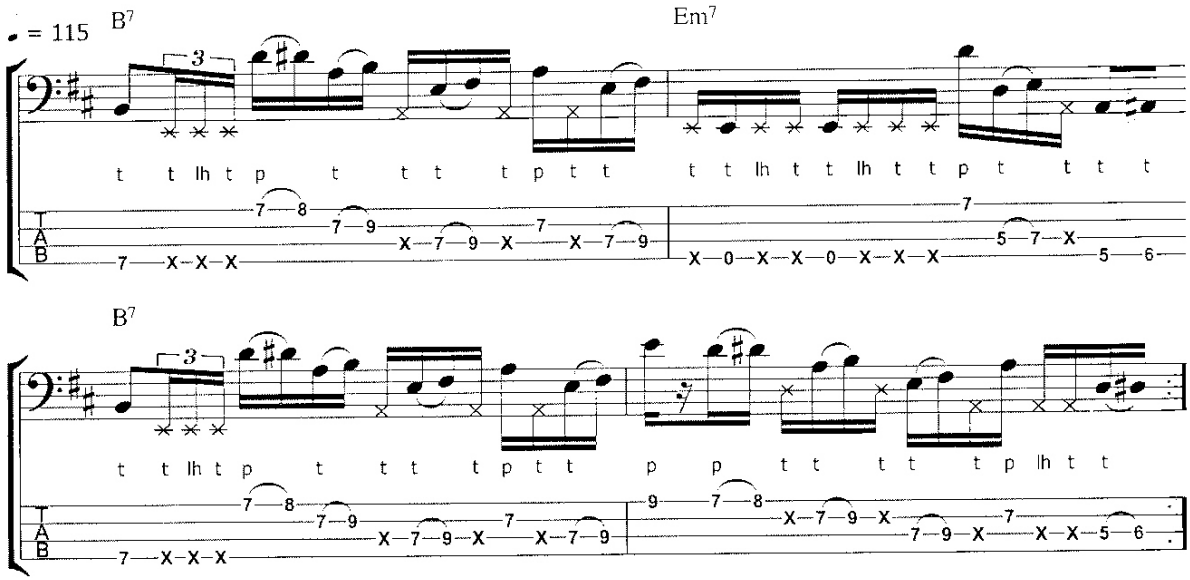
Exercise 132

This line is a development of Exercise 125, so be sure to have that one under your belt before working on it. Although it features many of the same open string tenths as the previous one, this time we have a key centre of B minor, which gives it an entirely different sound. Note that the fourth bar is a development of the second. Instead of simply strumming the upper register Bm chord, you need to play a descending chordal pattern of Bm, A and G^{maj7}.



Exercise 133

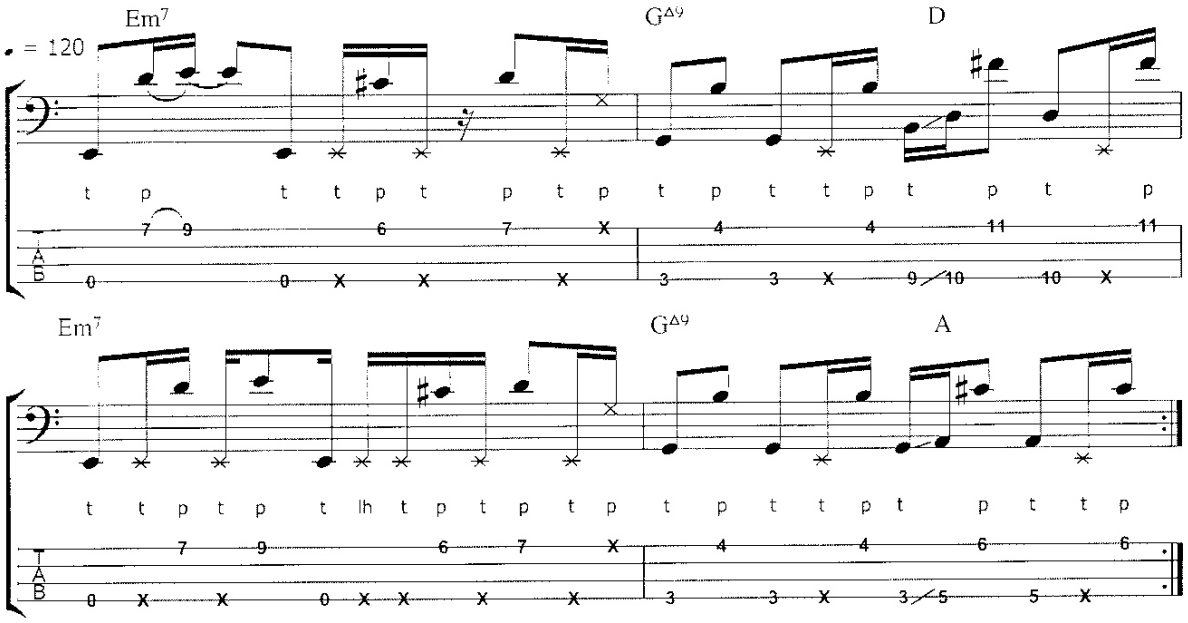
This exercise features a sixteenth note triplet on the first beat of bars 1 and 3. Remember to keep the B fretted as you play the triplet. You'll find it best to keep your first finger on the B, and then jump it across the G string for the D at the beginning of beat 2. The second bar has some right and left hand slapping that requires accurate right/left hand coordination, and the fourth bar contains a classic slap fill that utilises many of the 'funk figures' discussed in Chapter 5.



Exercise 134

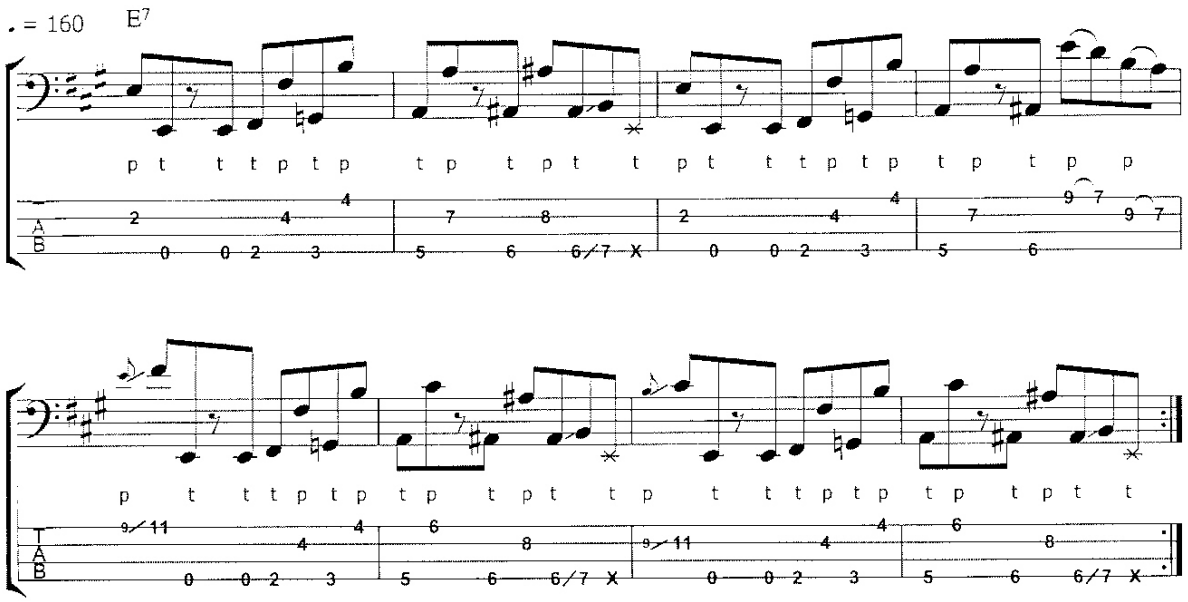
CD 2: Track 22

This one uses several tenths to outline the harmony. Be sure to let the bass notes ring beneath the upper notes to maximize the chordal effect. Again, make sure that the sixteenth note rest in bars 1 and 3 is played as a rest; it really helps the line to groove.



Exercise 135

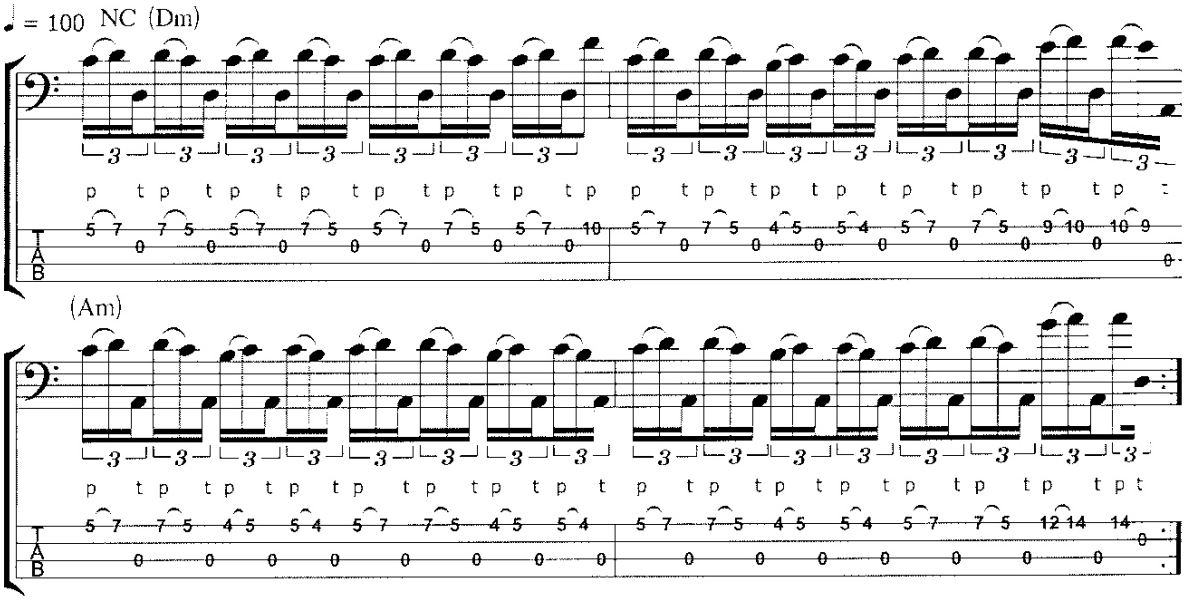
This exercise is reminiscent of the classic Larry Graham song 'Hair'. Although the tempo is very fast, the line only consists of eighth notes. It helps to 'feel' this exercise in half time - it could easily have been written as sixteenth notes at half the speed, but seems more natural this way. There are a few tenths here, as well as some pentatonic figures and grace notes. The eighth note rests are vital to the feel here.



Exercise 136

CD 2: Track 23

This manic looking exercise makes excellent use of open strings. I recommend taking each bar a beat at a time - there is a lot of repetition, but a few variations along the way too. Practise this one slowly as it's easy to lose the rhythm. This line is vaguely reminiscent of Flea's intro part to the Red Hot Chili Peppers track 'Nobody Weird Like Me'.



Stu Hamm & T.M. Stevens *Photo courtesy of Bass Guitar Magazine*